AUGUSTA DENBEIGH;

Catharine Cole

A NOVEL.

DUBLIN:

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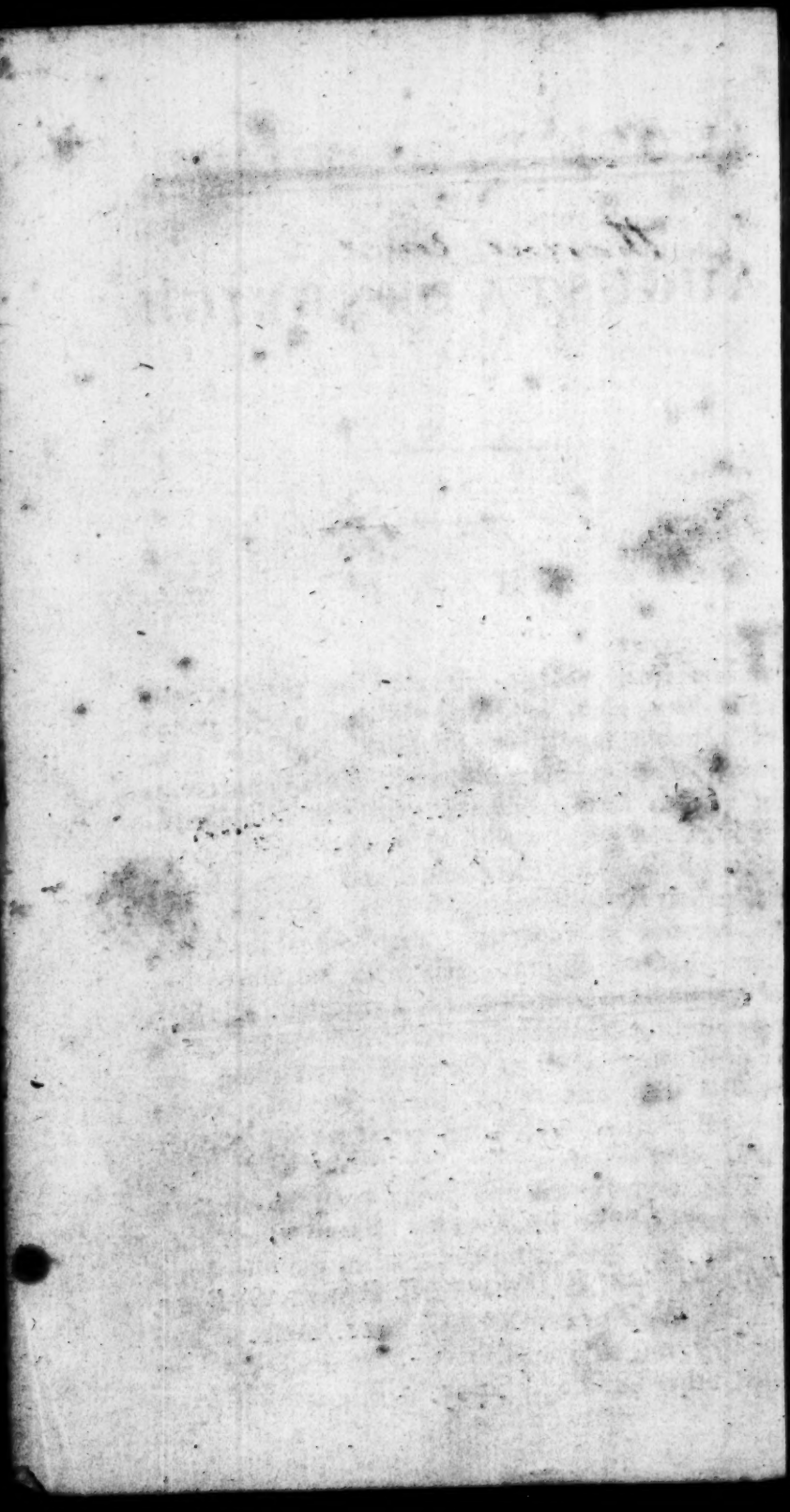

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH.

CHAP. I.

IN a ſmall village, ſituated on the declivity of a deep glen, in North Wales, a clergyman of a noble family in England, had for ſome time taken up his reſidence. Diſappointments of various ſorts, had rendered him ſo diſſatisfied with the great world, that almoſt at the meridian of life, he had formed the extraordinary reſolution of abandoning ſociety, for which he had ceaſed to experience any other ſenſation, than that of diſguſt. His wiſh for obſcurity, could not have been more fully gratified: The high ſurrounding mountains, covered either with heath, or preſenting views of the moſt ſteril rocks, repreſſed the curioſity of thoſe few who travel for obſervation, and none could be led thither from other motives.

The torrents that fell from theſe mountains, and fertilized a ſmall valley, over which they ſcared their projecting heads; on the ſide ſtood about a dozen huts, the vicarage houſe and the church, which in more improved parts of the country might eaſily have been miſtaken for ſome other building. In ſeparating himſelf from

the world, Mr. Euſton could not forget thoſe duties, which choice had impoſed upon him; and as his mind was active, and his religion unaffected, his plan would have been incomplete, without the care of a ſmall flock. To theſe he diſpenſed both plenty and cheerfulneſs, the one, by inſtructing them how to cultivate their land, the other by diſpoſing their minds to benevolence. He defined happineſs to conſiſt, in the conſtant purſuit of intereſting employments; and as his ſources of amuſement were not various, his ſucceſs was proportioned to the avidity of his perſeverance: hence his little territory ſeemed a blooming Eden, amidſt the dreary waſte.

General conſent ſeems to have excluded the inhabitants of cities, from one of the moſt ſublime enjoyments of nature, the contemplation of the riſing ſun, whoſe glorious animating beams afford to the humble cottager cauſe of admiration, wonder, and delight. Mr. Euſton ſeldom ſuffered its firſt rays to gild the tops of the oppoſite mountains, before he had taſted the refreſhing breath of the morning air. As uſual, he left his bed early, and was proceeding to a little garden at the front of his houſe, when on opening the door, he perceived a deal box in which an infant was laid, who appeared faſt aſleep. Involuntary ſurpriſe fixed him for ſome moments to the ſpot he ſtood on; he almoſt doubted the reality of what he ſaw, and to convince himſelf, took the ſleeping child gently in his arms; it became rouſed by his careſſes, and awaking in great good humour, ſmiled upon its new nurſe. His emotions of ſurpriſe, now gave way to a ſort of tenderneſs he had never felt before, and he im-

printed

rinted a kiſs on the ſoft cheek of the little cherub, who ſet up a cry, as if offended at the freedom; he noiſe brought the houſekeeper into the hall, o whom Mr. Euſton awkwardly enough, held out is little burden.

"Bleſs us, ſir," ſaid ſhe, taking the infant rom him, "where did this ſweet baby come rom?"

"I know not," anſwered Mr. Euſton "I ound it at the door."

"At the door!" exclaimed Mrs. Davey.

"In this box, replied he, without any cover-g, and faſt aſleep; therefore it is evident it ould not have lain there long."

"And what does your honour intend to do? ied Mrs. Davey; la, ſir! I warrant the parents e of good account, for the child is not in the rt of cloaths uſed by the people of this coun-y."

"Do! ſaid Mr. Euſton, why take care of the ttle creature, to be ſure."

The cries of the infant now became more loud, nd Mrs. Davey conveyed it into the kitchen, here ſhe ſoon procured ſome warm milk and read, which it eat very readily. Mr. Euſton ould not help following the houſekeeper, and hilſt ſhe gave it food, ſtood by her with his rms folded, in an attitude of deep thought.

It was a lovely girl abou tſeven months old.

"What ſhall we do for clothes?" ſaid Mr. uſton.

"Perhaps, ſir, replied Mrs. Davey, there are me in the box."

"Trtue, anſwered he, I will go and exa-ine.

The conjecture of Mrs. Davey was right; the en the child was laid upon, conſiſted of ap-

parel made plain, but of very fine materials. The ſight of theſe again excited the curioſity of Mrs. Davey.

"Won't your honour try to find out who brought the child here?" ſaid ſhe.

"What ſignifies that," anſwered Mr. Euſton, rather more peeviſhly than he was uſed to ſpeak, "the parents have, no doubt, good reaſons for concealing it, and there are none, why I ſhould not accept the truſt they have repoſed in me."

The infant now began to ſolicit his notice, by a playfulneſs peculiar to its age. "Davey, ſaid he, in a ſoftened tone of voice, do not fatigue yourſelf with attending this little charge, but provide one of the peaſant's daughters, who will be able to nurſe it under your direction." With this injunction he left her, and purſued his morning walk.

He traverſed the fields with haſty ſteps, regardleſs of the objects, which uſed to engage his attention, for his thoughts were totally abſorbed by this ſtrange incident; and reflection, inſtead of compoſing him, added to his perplexity. The only conjecture, he could form was that ſome one who knew him, and had traced out his retirement, had conſigned to his humanity for a time, the charge he had received, and his reſolutions ended as they had began, in a firm determination to take care of the child.

In the ſtate of uncertainty in which Mr. Euſton remained, reſpecting the baptiſm of the little girl, he held it right to perform that ceremony, and beſtowed upon it the name of Auguſta, to which he afterwards added that of Denbeigh.——

His days were now become of double value, r the engaging diſpoſition and companionable ualities of Auguſta, had ſo entirely gained his ffections, that her education employed his hole attention for two or three years. He ad been in ſome ſort of expectation, that e obſcurity of her birth would be done way; but now, if he thought at all about , it was with fear, leſt any explanation ould ariſe which might deprive him of his rotégée.

In the early part of his life, Mr. Euſton d made great proficiency in moſt of thoſe ac- mpliſhments, which become a young man f faſhion. He ſpoke Italian and French with uency, had ſtudied the rules for drawing under e firſt maſters, and was eminently diſtinguiſh- d for his fine execution, on ſeveral muſical nſtruments. He had a ſmall Piano Forté and Violin, and generally cloſed his evenings, ith the ſweet and ſoothing touches of harmo- y. Solicitous to ſtore the mind of his dar- ng Auguſta, with the ſame reſources as he imſelf poſſeſſed, he ventured on the arduous aſk of becoming her preceptor. Her genius owever was ſo quick, and her retentive facul- ies ſo ſtrong, that nothing ſeemed difficult o her, and at the age of fifteen, ſhe might almoſt e called an adept, in whatever ſhe had at- mpted to learn. Theſe ſtudies had not led Mr. Euſton to neglect thoſe of higher impor- nce, for he had principally aimed to give her ind a turn for reflection, and to encourage e generous propenſities of her feeling heart. e had inſpired her with a taſte for the ſimple leaſures of life, which frequently excite the moſt ſublime ideas; thus their rambles thro'

the fields were rendered intereſting, by the examination of plants, whoſe ſtructure exhibit ſuch wonderful marks of the divine creator, as cannot fail of impreſſing the ſoul, with the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of piety and adoration. Nor did he neglect to bring her acquainted with the ſyſtem of that extraordinary man, who with a felicity of judgment peculiar to himſelf, has diſcovered the organization of every plant, and aſſigned to each the rank which they actually hold in the vegetable world.

Thus ſerenely paſſed the days of Auguſta and her father, for ſo ſhe had been permitted to call him, until the death of the good old Mrs. Davey interrupted for a time, the happineſs they experienced.

CHAP. II.

SOMETIMES whilſt Mr. Euſton was employed in obſerving his labourers, Auguſta would extend her walk, and climbing up the rugged aſcents of the rock, would ſit enchanted with the glowing tints, which the laſt rays of the ſetting ſun, would throw upon the adjacent mountains. One evening late in Auguſt, ſhe had ventured farther than uſual, and was buſily employed in collecting a beautiful ſpecimen of moſs, when her little dog, who was her only companion, began to bark, and ſhe inſtantly ſaw two pointers ruſh thro' the heath to ſeize him; they attacked him ſo furiouſly, that ſhe durſt not attempt his reſcue, and whilſt

ſhe

e ſtood a diſtreſſed ſpectatreſs of the combat, figure preſented himſelf before her, who al-noſt diverted her attention from Fidele, ſo ifferent was his appearance from any thing he had ever ſeen before; nor was the ſtranger ſs ſurpriſed than herſelf; but his feelings aroſe rom an oppoſite cauſe, the involuntary admi-ation which real beauty never fails to inſpire. How long each might have indulged their dif-erent emotions, or what might have been the ate of poor Fidele, is difficult to ſay, had not nother gentleman arrived, who called off the ogs; when Auguſta ſnatching up her little avourite in her arms, ſprang into a narrow path, nd was out of ſight in a moment. She was ot long in reaching Mr. Euſton's habitation; nd as ſoon as ſhe could recover her breath, egan to relate the adventure ſhe had met with, " my little Fidele's danger, ſaid ſhe, was cauſe ufficient for alarm, but indeed my dear ſir, the an's appearance terrified me alſo." Here ſhe ntered upon the deſcription of it, and Mr. Euſ-on much diverted, diſcovered that this groteſque eing, was ſome gentleman habited in a ſhoot-ng dreſs.

Whilſt they were converſing thus, two ſer-ants with led horſes approached the door. Such n unuſual ſight threw Auguſta into freſh agi-ation, and ſurpriſed even Mr. Euſton, who ent himſelf to learn their buſineſs. They nformed him that Lord Euſton and Mr. De-ereux, had been taking the diverſion of grouſe hooting upon the hills, and that the former iſhed to pay his duty to him, and entreat-d the favour of lodgings, for himſelf and his riend.

Mr. Euſton returned with haſte to Auguſta, who ſince the death of Mrs. Davey, had ſuperintended his little family; "two very unexpected viſitors are arrived, my love, ſaid he, the one is my nephew Lord Euſton, and they mean to paſs the night here. Will you give ſuch orders, as you think neceſſary for their accommodation?"

Auguſta loſt not a moment in complying with this requeſt, and had but juſt quitted the hall, as the two gentlemen entered it.

The meeting was rather awkward on both ſides, for although the benevolence of Mr. Euſton's heart was too great, for him to feel any diſpleaſure againſt a nephew, whom he had never before ſeen, yet ſo many inſtances of his brother's unkindneſs, ruſhed at once upon his mind, that he was more paſſive than cordial, in receiving the embraces of Lord Euſton, who, as there was a ſpectator of their interview, felt no ſmall ſhare of embarraſſment, at the coolneſs of his reception. He at length preſented his friend, and added, that as they were ſo near the habitation of an uncle, to whom he had long wiſhed to pay his duty, he could not prevail upon himſelf to renounce the gratification.

Such an affectionate appellation, which had never before met his ears, vibrated thro' the whole frame of Mr. Euſton, and with a ſimilar effect to the ſweet modulations of harmony, baniſhed every diſcordant paſſion from his ſoul. He now caught Lord Euſton in his arms, and gave ſuch a welcome to his friend as charmed both.

The gentlemen now produced the game they had killed, and refuſing any refreſhment before ſup-

ſupper, except that ariſing from a change of apparel, Mr. Euſton conducted them to apartments for that purpoſe.

Lord Euſton was in his twentieth year; he was good humoured, lively and thoughtleſs, and had a countenance which expreſſed as much. He had conſiderable degree of eaſe, and faſhion in his manner, and nothing threw him under reſtraint but the ſeverity of his father, who was ſo anxious for a dignity of deportment, in the repreſentative of his family, that they ſeldom agreed when they were together, which was not very often. He was not devoid of feeling, but it was only called forth, upon extraordinary occaſions; thus his meeting with his uncle, had affected him for the moment, becauſe it was a ſcene altogether new to him; and thus, the charms of Auguſta had made a great impreſſion on his heart, becauſe he had never before beheld ſuch unadorned beauty.

Perhaps Auguſta had never looked more lovely, than on the very evening, when chance had firſt produced their rencontre: Her figure was of that graceful ſort, which a ſimple ſtyle of dreſs diſplays to the utmoſt advantage; and her anxiety for the ſafety of Fidele, had given an expreſſion of tenderneſs to her fine features, which made them almoſt irreſiſtible; Lord Euſton had not ceaſed to reproach himſelf for having ſuffered her to eſcape, or to make encomiums on her beauty to his friend Mr. Devereux, who had been at too great a diſtance to obſerve her ſo much, and whoſe attention had been chiefly taken up, in endeavouring to extricate the little animal from the fury of his aſſailants.

Mr. Devereux was ſecond ſon to the Earl of Sunderne; his perſon was uncommonly elegant, and there was a ſort of intelligence in his countenance, which intereſted every one who beheld him. He poſſeſſed a gentleneſs of manners which was free from inſipidity, and when he ſpoke, it was with a degree of animation which convinced his hearers, that he poſſeſſed the energy of a noble mind.

When the gentleman returned to the ſtudy, they found Auguſta with Mr. Euſton, who preſenting them to her, ſaid, "This is my Auguſta."

Lord Euſton in the exuberance of his joy at ſeeing her again, exclaimed, "Indeed! is this lovely creature my couſin?"

This queſtion involved Mr. Euſton in a difficulty he had never before thought of; however, with admirable preſence of mind, he replied, "If I do not preſent her to you as a couſin, I at leaſt may venture to preſent her, as one of the moſt valuable of her ſex."

An inquiry after her dog, who lay by her with one of his feet bound up, firſt convinced Auguſta of what ſhe almoſt doubted, that theſe were the ſame perſons ſhe had met on the mountain, ſo great was the transformation produced by dreſs.

"I hope he is not hurt much," ſaid Mr. Devereux, taking him gently from the floor.

"I fear he is, replied Auguſta, for he will not bear me to touch his foot, and does not attempt to ſtir from the place where I lay him down,

"Oh!

"Oh! if his leg be broke, ſaid Lord Euſton, laughingly, Devereux I dare ſay can ſet it."

"I ſhould certainly wiſh, and would try, to repair the injury I had in part occaſioned, anſwered Mr. Devereux, but I believe Madam, I can relieve your apprehenſions on that account, for the leg is only bruiſed.

Here ſupper was announced, and Mr. Euſton telling his gueſts that he hoped they were ſportſmen ſufficient to live on the produce of their guns, for that his habitation ſupplied little variety, conducted them to the eating room.

After ſupper was over, the converſation took a very lively turn, in which as the ſubjects were adapted to Auguſta, ſhe ſuſtained her part, with eaſe to herſelf; for altho' this might be termed her firſt introduction to *a party*, ſhe felt no embarraſſment, where ſhe was conſcious of committing no impropriety. Mr. Euſton beheld the way in which ſhe acquitted herſelf, with inexpreſſible delight, for he had not until then, made ſuch anxious obſervations, on the ſweetneſs and dignity of her manners, and had too much humility to know how large a portion, ſhe muſt have imbibed from himſelf. He told his viſitors, that they generally devoted an hour to muſick every evening, and Lord Euſton ſeizing Auguſta by the hand, placed her at the piano forté; he was rapturous in his commendations of her performance, "But will you not ſing?" ſaid he.

"We have none of the faſhionable airs of the preſent day, ſaid Mr. Euſton, but Auguſta will

will give you ſome old ballad, which I ſelected in former times."

Her voice, naturally full, ſweet and pathetic, gave great force to the ſubject ſhe had choſen, and when ſhe had finiſhed it, and roſe from her ſeat, ſhe perceived Mr. Devereux ſtill gazing upon her, with a melancholy attention; this threw her into ſome little confuſion, and ſhe ſeized the moment of general ſilence, to bid them good night.

On their ſeparation, the mind of each individual was deeply, tho' variouſly employed. Mr. Euſton had not failed to obſerve the admiration, which the beauty and accompliſhments of Auguſta had excited; nor did the curioſity of Lord Euſton, to diſcover who ſhe was, eſcape his notice. He ſaw the neceſſity of imparting ſomething of her hiſtory, but how to do it, without wounding her delicacy, gave him no ſmall diſtreſs.

Auguſta had retired with *her* thoughts, more buſily employed than they had ever been before. The highly poliſhed manners of the ſtrangers, their reſpectful attentions, and apparent admiration of her, were alike new, flattering and pleaſing. She began to wonder why Mr. Euſton had abandoned ſuch ſociety, and indulged herſelf in conjectures, until a ſweet ſlumber put an end to them.

Lord Euſton did not once cloſe his eyes, he aſſured himſelf that he was diſtractedly in love with Auguſta; that he could not live without her; and reſolved not to quit his preſent abode, until he had learnt what her ſituation with reſpect to his uncle really was.

Mr. Devereux's waking moments were differently employed; ſurpriſe was almoſt the predominant paſſion which he felt. In a ſpot where

here he expected to find only a ſevere re-
uſe, he had met with beauty, elegance,
nd ſuch refined ſentiments, as were exact-
y congenial with his own taſte. He regret-
ed that a character ſo formed to delight, and
mprove the world as Mr. Euſton, ſhould
ave had cauſe to become a voluntary exile
rom it; and when he contemplated the lot of
uguſta, connected as it ſeemed to be, with
he choice of Mr. Euſton, he could not help la-
menting that ſuch charms were to be buried
n obſcurity.

Mr. Euſton kept his chamber much later
han uſual, knowing well that his gueſts would
not abandon theirs at an early hour. He
was however ſoon joined by them, after he
had reached his garden, and on receiving
ſome compliments from Mr. Devereux, on his
romantic ſituation, and the high ſtate of culture
t was in, he replied, "It is in truth a ſpot en-
leared to me from the recollection, that dur-
ng the forty years I have reſided on it, I have
met with no one circumſtance, which could
give me real pain. The peaſants who are
ny tenants, regard me with affection; but
Auguſta, (and his eyes filled with tears,) is the
olace of my age; then turning to lord Euſton,
e continued, ſhe is not your couſin, but
he child of misfortune, and my adopted
laughter!"

Lord Euſton caught hold of his hand, and
would have ſaid ſomething, but his lips denied
im utterance. Mr. Devereux likewiſe, was too
much affected to attempt to ſpeak, and breakfaſt
was announced, at a moment favourable to the
eelings of each.

The inquiries of Auguſta, ſoon reſtored gene-
al cheerfulneſs, and during the repaſt Mr. Euſ-
ton

ton ſaid to her, "How my love, ſhall we be able to prevail upon our friends to prolong their ſtay?"

"I know not, replied ſhe ſmiling, unleſs they are as much tired of gayety, as we are delighted with the interruption they occaſion to our ſolitude."

"I, cried Lord Euſton eagerly, ſhall quit this place with ſo much regret that I cannot be ſufficiently grateful for the prolongation of my felicity, in receiving permiſſion to ſtay ſome time with you."

"And I, ſaid Mr. Devereux, looking alternately at Mr. Euſton and Auguſta, have not found in any place in buſy life, ſuch requiſites to happineſs, as theſe tranquil ſcenes afford."

"Well then, replied Mr. Euſton, you muſt purſue the ſports of the field by yourſelves for to thoſe I cannot accompany you, and when you are tired return to me and Auguſta."

CHAP. III.

LORD Euſton and Mr. Devereux, had paſſed a week in this delightful abode of peace and ſimplicity, when the engagements of the latter demanded his departure. "You, Euſton, ſaid he, ſeem to have forgot that the world contains any other inhabitants, than what are to be found on this little ſpot; and diſpoſed as I am, to grant them the pre-eminence their characters entitle them to, yet I muſt liſten to thoſe claims, which require my preſence elſewhere."

"I do not ſuppoſe, replied Lord Euſton, in a dejected tone of voice, that my uncle will think it

right, to urge me to ſtay longer than you do; erefore, as you have penetrated into the real ate of my heart, I expect from your friendſhip, l the indulgence you can give; do not, I beſeech ou, tear me from hence, until you can no longer lay it?"

"That period, ſaid Mr. Devereux, with ſome notion, is arrived, and I can remain here no nger than to-morrow morning."

The entrance of Mr. Euſton interrupted the converſation, who perceiving evident marks of diſcontent in the countenance of his nephew, ould not forbear inquiring the cauſe.

"It is a melancholy one to me, anſwered ord Euſton, for we were talking of leaving you -morrow."

"If indiſpenſible motives require it, ſaid Mr. uſton, it would neither be polite nor friendly in e to ſolicit you farther, and the flattering indi- tions of regret, which I perceive, incline me to lieve, that you would not elſe adopt the reſoluti- n; all I ſhall therefore ſay, is, that when the turn of ſummer again holds forth to you an in- ducement, to viſit this ſolitary region, you will ake me moſt truely happy, by repeating the fa- ur of your viſit."

Mr. Devereux bowed in ſilence, but Lord Euſ- n could not conceal his chagrin: "What, ſaid , uncle, when we are ſo miſerable about leav- g you, do you not aſk us to return before next mmer?"

Mr. Devereux prevented an immediate reply, Be aſſured my dear ſir, ſaid he, taking Mr. ſton's hand which he preſſed with energy, that hours I have paſſed here, are too precious to remembrance, for me to neglect the permiſ- n you have given me, to viſit you again; it is probable.

probable I ſhall not return from the continent, where I am going, long before the time you mention; and I ſhall not think I have acquitted myſelf, of all the duties I owe my native country, until I have paid my reſpects to you."

The evening was uncommonly fine, and as the idea of a ſeparation had infected the whole party with mutual ſenſations of regret, Mr. Euſton propoſed they ſhould take a long walk, and try to divert their thoughts, by a view of the ſublime ſcenery around them. He conducted them by the ſide of a ſtream, to a valley ſo fearfully narrow, that it ſeemed rather a chaſm, rent aſunder in the rocks, by ſome violent operation of nature. Here, whilſt they were obſerving the vaſt fragments, which hung impending over their heads, Lord Euſton found means to detach Auguſta from their companions, "I am about to quit you, ſaid he, but I cannot do it without telling you, that I love you to diſtraction."

Auguſta's cheeks glowed with a higher vermilion tint, than they had ever done before, and ſhe ſtepped haſtily forward.

"You are diſpleaſed with me, continued he, and I am miſerable."

"How can I be otherwiſe than diſpleaſed with you, ſaid Auguſta, ſince you thus try to efface from the favourable impreſſions which your former behaviour would have left upon my memory?"

"Let me but hope, replied he, that you do entertain ſome favourable ſentiments for me, and I will cheriſh them, even by my ſilence, if that be your wiſh?"

"Miſtake me not, anſwered Auguſta, the ſentiments I do and only can feel for you, are those which are your due, as the nephew of my revered benefactor."

"Cru

"Cruel Auguſta! cried Lord Euſton dejected-
is it that your heart is inſenſible, or does ſome
ppier man——"

"I will anſwer you with ſincerity, ſir, replied
guſta, and ſpare you the concluſion of your in-
ries. I know not whether my heart be inſen-
e, but I am ſure it has felt no ſuch attach-
nt, as that you allude to; and with equal truth
nay add, it will never be a gift I can beſtow
n your Lordſhip. If inclination did not de-
thus for me, how could you ever ſuppoſe I
ld repay the paternal obligations I owe to
Euſton, by receiving the clandeſtine addreſ-
of his nephew?"

"Call them not clandeſtine,—conſent but to
end your rejection, until in the face of the
le world, I may lay my title and my fortune
our feet, cried Lord Euſton."

"No, my Lord, ſaid Auguſta, for even then,
ould prove that I had attended to the precepts
our noble uncle, and ſave you from an ac-
unworthy of yourſelf." As ſhe ſpoke this,
quickened her ſteps, and joined Mr. Euſton
Mr. Devereux.

The ſhades of evening now fell around them,
reminded them that it was time to return
ne. The daſhing of the water along a chan-
obſtructed by large maſſes of rock, was
d more diſtinctly in the dead ſilence of ap-
ching night, whilſt the ſummits of the craggy
, almoſt receding from the ſight, preſented
ouſand fantaſtic forms to their imaginations.
s they approached the houſe, Mr. Devereux
to Auguſta, "The grandeur of the ſcene I
juſt beheld, can never be effaced from my
nory; and the pleaſures of this day, can only
equalled by the ſufferings which to-morrow
will

will bring. Perhaps the moment of bidding you adieu, Madam, may be too,——perhaps I may not then be able to wiſh to that excellence I ſo much revere, all the felicity which ought to be its portion."

He then bowed upon her hand; and Auguſta was too much affected with this reſpectful adieu, to attempt making any reply.

It was agreed that the gentlemen ſhould ſet out early in the morning, to avoid the repetition of a parting ſcene: The evening cloſed without their once thinking of muſick, and at a late hour they retired to their apartments.

CHAP. IV.

THE departure of his gueſts, left Mr. Euſton's mind, in a ſtate of much diſcompoſure. Happy in the filial affection of Auguſta, he had never looked forward to the moment of loſing her; but the admiration her beauty had now received, and the too viſible partiality of his nephew, had excited the moſt anxious thoughts for her future eſtabliſhment. The haughty ſpirit of his brother would, he knew, look down with diſdain on any alliance for his ſon, which did not boaſt the ſplendour of both riches and anceſtry; and his own heart revolted from the idea of a union, which in him might be attributed to the wiſh of retaliating the injuries he had ſuſtained from the Earl: Indeed it was this, which led him to fix ſo diſtant a period for his nephew's viſit. Auguſta, in his eye, would have graced a coronet, inſtead of being graced by it; but he knew

knew that he had out-lived the opinions of the world, where pre-eminence of birth, and a superfluity of wealth, supercede every other recommendation. He reflected that at his age, life could be of no long continuance, and to leave her without an eſtabliſhment, or even one proper connexion, would expoſe her to difficulties, which her extreme ignorance of the world, rendered the more alarming to his imagination. His whole ſtore of riches, was barely three thouſand pounds, for affluence had deſerted him, before he deſerted the affluent; and he had never entertained a thought of accumulating wealth again, until Auguſta, helpleſs and unprovided, became his charge; ſince then he had however made an annual ſaving, and remitted it to his banker.

After mature deliberation, he determined to conquer his repugnance to enter again into ſociety, ſince that ſeemed to offer the only means of preſerving his poor Auguſta, from the calamities his fancy had ſuggeſted. He propoſed to himſelf, to ſpend the winter in London, and renew ſuch of his former connexions, as would be likely to prove of ſervice to her: and he flattered himſelf, that an eſtabliſhed good acquaintance, would be a certain ſecurity againſt thoſe evils he had dreaded. As he never concealed a thought in his own boſom, which he knew would give pleaſure to hers, he immediately communicated his determination to her, but without hinting at the motive; and ſhe, with all the ardour which a young mind, naturally feels in the purſuit of novelty, anticipated the happineſs which he had prepared for her.

As Mr. Euſton had maintained no other ſort of intercourſe with the world, than what buſineſs ſome-

ſometimes required, the ſight of a letter was altogether a novelty: indeed ſuch communications could only reach him one day in a week, when the ſervant, who ſuperintended his farm, went to the market town, which was diſtant from them thirteen miles.

Mr. Euſton was employed in anſwering ſome of Auguſta's inquiries reſpecting London, when a letter was delivered to him He read it, put his hand to his forehead, and fetched a deep groan. Auguſta, who had never ſeen his temper ruffled upon any occaſion, became greatly terrified, ſhe threw down her work and flew to him, "My dear ſir!" was all ſhe could ſay.

"I am not ill my love, ſaid he, but I have here found a ſtroke of fortune, to which I own my philoſophy is unequal."

Auguſta extremely agitated, could not receive the letter he held out to her.

"I am wrong, ſaid he, to occaſion you ſuch cauſeleſs terror, and will puniſh myſelf for it by repeating the contents of the letter. The banker, in whoſe hands I had placed my whole ſtock of money, is become a bankrupt."

"And what is the conſequence of that?" aſked Auguſta.

"That I muſt loſe it all, replied Mr. Euſton ſo my letter tells me."

"Oh, ſir! cried Auguſta, how you relieve me! I dreaded ſomething fatal to your peace,—to my happineſs,——nor can I be ſufficiently grateful to Providence, that the evil is no worſe

"My child, ſaid Mr. Euſton, you do not foreſee as I do, the probable conſequences of this loſs; but to go no farther, (and he forced a faint ſmile,) what will my Auguſta ſay, to a diſappointment

ointment in that pleaſant ſcheme, which but ow occupied our converſation?"

"If you mean our excurſion to London, re- lied ſhe, I renounce it with my whole heart, or, indeed, in the midſt of all the gay expect- ncies it produced, I was ſtill doubtful of our eing ſo happy there, as we are now."

"Your obſervation, ſaid Mr. Euſton, is at nce a *reproof* and a *cordial* to me; we act rong when we make ourſelves miſerable about hoſe events, which may be intended for our ood, or which we have in our power to ſur- nount, by an exertion of our fortitude. Your trength of mind, has given renovation to mine; or ſolely on the account of my Auguſta, was he conflict ſuſtained."

"Then cried ſhe, preſſing his hands to her ips, promiſe the happy Auguſta, who can ex- erience no misfortune whilſt ſhe poſſeſſes ſuch friend and benefactor, that you will not ſuf- er this incident to prey upon your ſpirits longer an the preſent moment."

"I promiſe her, ſaid he, that the only re- aining wiſh of my heart, is to promote her fe- city;" and kiſſing her, he bade her a good ight.

Left to himſelf, he could no longer repreſs the oignancy of thoſe feelings, which this fatal nformation had excited. He beheld Auguſta, he child of his affection, the ſupport of his ge, expoſed to all the horrors of unfriended po- erty; nor could he frame a ſingle project to emedy a calamity, which his age ſeemed to nder inevitable. His boſom was tormented ith a thouſand diſtracting thoughts, and for the irſt time ſince he entered his peaceful habitation, leep forſook his eyelids.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

THE ſolicitude of Auguſta's inquiries, the enſuing morning, convinced Mr. Euſton that his appearance betrayed thoſe emotions, which he wiſhed to conceal; he ſtrove to be cheerful, but it was alas! in vain, for this ſtroke ſeemed to have chilled the current of life; ſome days paſſed with continued efforts on his part, and equally concealed agonies on that of Auguſta; ſhe too plainly perceived his altered looks, the melancholy by which he was abſorbed, and how ineffectual her endeavours were to chaſe it away; ſhe carefully endeavoured to conceal the bitterneſs of her anguiſh, whenever he was preſent, but the hours of her retirement were ſpent in tears. At length ſhe became unable to ſupport herſelf under her fears, and beſought him to call in ſome medical advice.

"If I found myſelf ill, ſaid he, I would not heſitate to do ſo; but indeed I have not one ailment, of which I ſhould know how to complain to a phyſician. My mind it is true, does not poſſeſs its accuſtomed cheerfulneſs, but where ſhall I meet with a cure for that, when the tenderneſs of my Auguſta fails to perform it."

She could only anſwer him with tears, and he continued thus, "I have been viewing the paſt occurrences of my life, and although the retroſpect taken in the aggregate is unpleaſant, you ought not to be unacquainted with it, eſpecially as the latter part is ſo materially connected with your own; and when we have finiſhed our tea, I will give you the relation."

Auguſta

Auguſta ſtrove to attain a look of compoſure, d thought it right to remind Mr. Euſton of the omiſe he had given her.

" My father, ſaid he, the Earl of Seaton had ur ſons, of whom I was the youngeſt. It was misfortune to loſe my mother at ſo early a riod of my life, that I have no recollection of ; ſhe was of a noble family, but had little for- ne, and her perſonal charms made an impreſ- n on my father, when he was too young to m intereſted views. A long minority had en him an uncontroulable ſpirit ; he delighted exhibit all the exteriors of grandeur, and un- ppily for his family, indulged himſelf in a taſte had imbibed for high play ; his eſtate, tho' ge, conſequently became deeply encumbered. is uſual in ſuch caſes, the younger ſons were look forward for proviſion, in the church or y. My brothers choſe the former, my electi- you know."

" We were educated at home, under the care a tutor, and my father's thoughtleſs extrava- ce, extended even to his children, for we e indulged in every expence, that either faſhi- or caprice led us to adopt. My eldeſt bro- , who was nine years older than me, went oad at the age of eighteen, and in due time I ſent to Oxford."

" My father's ſplendid ſtyle of living, had e me known to almoſt every young man of ſequence, and my company was univerſally ted. The diſſipation which now chiefly cha- erizes that place, which our anceſtors wiſely ſecrated to learning, ſoon obliterated the few ims of ſelf denial, with which my mind had n furniſhed, and I entered into all the exceſ- , which money could procure. My demands were

were ſo great, that my father began to remon
ſtrate; but his taſte for expence, held out t
me an excuſe for mine, and I continued incorrig
ble."

"I had returned to Oxford for the laſt term
before I was to take orders, when a meſſenge
followed me with the news of his having died ſud
denly."

"Deeply affected with ſorrow at this unexpec
ed event, I haſtened to town, and found that a
expreſs had alſo been diſpatched to my eldeſt bro
ther, who was then at Paris. Preparations wer
made for the funeral, and he arrived before th
remains of our indulgent parent were conſigne
to their kindred duſt."

"On opening the will, we found that the e
tate was charged with ſeven thouſand pounds
each of the younger ſons. Lord Seaton appea
ed chagrined at this, but his mortification becam
too ſtrong for him to preſerve a proper degree
decorum in his behaviour, when he learnt th
there were alſo mortgages upon it, to the amou
of thirty thouſand pounds"

"I ſcarce gave myſelf a thought, about th
ſcantineſs of my own fortune; I knew there w
a living worth nine hundred a year in the gift
my brother, which had induced my father to wi
that one of us would enter into orders; a
until it ſhould become vacant, I thought myſe
ſecure of a reſidence in the houſe of my broth
The idea however was ſoon annihilated, by h
declaring that he ſhould let both his town a
country houſe, and retire to the continent, un
he had retrieved the family eſtate from its hea
incumbrances. The ſteward told him, th
might eaſily be done, without his quitting En
land, if he would conſent to live with œconom

he anſwered haughtily, that he could not
to witneſs the changes which muſt be made
is eſtabliſhment."

His determination firſt led me to reflect on
own ſituation, and how I were to ſupport the
earance I had hitherto made in the world. I
hed not to return to Oxford, as I found my re-
tion unequal to reform my mode of life,
ng my former companions. At length how-
I conquered this falſe ſhame, and reſolved
eturn thither for the ſhort time neceſſary, and
I had been ordained, to ſpend two or three
s, in making what is called the tour of Eu-
."

I wrote to Lord Seaton, to beg he would
me his advice about the route I ſhould take,
alſo ſome letters of introduction, at the
rent courts he had viſited. His anſwer ſur-
d me inexpreſſibly; it was cold and laconic;
id that letters of recommendation from him,
be of no real ſervice, ſince they would in-
ce me to ſuch ſocieties, as would lead me
xpences, which my fortune could not ſup-
and he ended with a hint, that if I were
mined to travel, I had beſt avoid thoſe places
he frequented, and to go as privately as poſ-
."

Good God! how ſevere were my ſenſations,
eading this extraordinary epiſtle; I had a
ulty in perſuading myſelf that a brother could
it; but alas! I knew not his character;
d been ſeparated whilſt I was too young to
any judgment of him."

I ſhould tell you that during this time, one
y brothers was at Gibraltar, and the other in
Veſt Indies."

 "I ſpent

"I ſpent ſeveral years in viſiting France, Ger-
many and Italy. I heard frequently from m
friends in England, and at length learnt th
Lord Seaton had returned thither, having liv
ſo frugally abroad, that he was ſuppoſed to ha
cleared his eſtate. This piece of news determi
ed me to reviſit my native country."

"On my arrival in London, I debated wi
myſelf whether I ſhould wait upon Lord Seato
who was then at Seaton Caſtle or not; and th
abſence had weakened my reſentment, feelin
hoped that time had alſo meliorated his affec
ons, and therefore determined to wait up
him."

"If he did not give me a cordial reception,
was at leaſt a civil one."

CHAP. VI.

I Had ſoon an opportunity of obſerving, t
Lord Seaton inherited the chief weakneſs of
father, without one of his virtues to plead in
tenuation of it. He affected to treat me w
that ſort of ceremonious reſpect, which is
once calculated to deſtroy confidence, and r
affection; and when I mentioned the time of
departure, he neither aſked me to prolong
ſtay, nor renew my viſit. On the morning I w
to leave him, we breakfaſted by accident alo
and I took occaſion to mention the living, wh
had been intended for me by my father, in a m
ner which could neither offend his pride nor h
my own. Never can his reply, or the unfee
manner in which he ſpoke it, be recolle
with

thout exciting the ſame ſort of agitation with ich I then heard it: He told me, that he had d the next preſentation ſome time ago."

"I quitted his houſe, without being able to onounce a farewell, and returned to town in a te of deſperation. The greateſt part of my pa- mony was ſpent; I had no relations whom I uld look up to for patronage, and my family d been ſo ſtrenuous in their oppoſition to mini- y, that I was deprived of all hopes, from any plications of that nature. The dejection of mind, threw me into a dangerous fever, from ich I was hardly recovered, when the news ved of the death of that brother, who had n ſome years ſtationed in the Weſt Indies. he died without a will, his fortune was divid- among us, and proved a very ſeaſonable relief my neceſſities."

About this time, a gentleman who had been moſt intimate friend at college, prevailed me to ſpend a few months at his ſeat, in weſt of England; he had often talked to me s ſiſter, whom I had never ſeen; and jeſt- adviſed me to propoſe myſelf to her, ad- that ſhe inherited a very large fortune from grandmother, and was juſt ſuch a romantic g as myſelf. To ſhorten my ſtory as much as ble, I could not remain inſenſible to the ms of Miſs Munſter; but the conſciouſneſs y own want of fortune, and the dread that ght be ſuſpected her's was my chief induce- , made me ſtruggle to ſuppreſs a paſſion, h had taken deep root in my heart. Munſter nded he had diſcovered a mutual attachment, by his encouragement, I at length ventured ake a declaration of mine. O Auguſta! you

are yet to learn that there are among your fe
thoſe, whoſe higheſt ambition is to condemn
lover to deſpair,—who delight in feigning a paſ
ſion they cannot feel, and by thus raiſing hope
which are to be for ever blaſted, render the miſe
ry of their victims more acute. This was m
fate,—and to add to the keenneſs of my ſuffer
ings, the man who had taken pains to ſupplan
me, was my brother, Lord Seaton; and th
friend who had foſtered my infant paſſion, baſel
deſerted my cauſe, and became an advocate fo
him.

" Shame and diſappointment, again drove m
to the continent; if I could have perſuaded my
ſelf to have adopted the tenets of the church o
Rome, I had ſurely then embraced a monaſti
life, and the ſecluſion practiſed by the monk
firſt gave me an idea of the plan I afterward
purſued. I began to think it poſſible, that ther
might be found for me in my own country, a ſo
litude ſuited to the colour of my fate. I traver
ed the moſt unfrequented parts of Wales, an
fortunately diſcovered juſt ſuch a ſpot as my fanc
had led me to wiſh. I applied to the poſſeſſor
who readily agreed to leaſe it to me for my life
and as the terms were adapted to the ſlender re
mains of my inheritance, I was ſoon ſettled i
my ſimple abode. I prevailed upon Mrs. Dav
to come and take the direction of my little hous
hold. She had been a nurſery maid at Seato
Caſtle when I was a child; and in endeavouring
ſave me from being hurt by a ladder, which I ha
pulled down from one of the fruit trees, fe
under it herſelf, and diſlocated her hip, by whic
means ſhe became a cripple. From the time
was of an age, to be ſenſible of her kind inte
ference, I had allowed her an annual ſtipend fo

ſupport; and the grateful creature rewarded
, by accepting this ſolitary life with cheerful-
ſs.

" The ſerenity of my days, formed for a
e their happineſs. I almoſt ceaſed to think of
orld, where I had been alike diſappointed in
e, friendſhip, fame, and fortune, and ſoon
ame devoted to the pleaſures, which the cul-
e of my fields, and the improvement of my
age, afforded me. The rude ignorance of
peaſants, demanded my pity, and required
aſſiſtance; I made them my humble friends;
if the reciprocity of intellectual intercourſe
denied me, I at leaſt eſcaped the mortificati-
which ingratitude inflicts, and the ſtill keener
gs which thoſe muſt endure, who no longer
in the ſunſhine of proſperity.

" Revolving years, brought neither change of
iment, nor change of life; and I had paſſed
e than twenty years on this ſpot, when Pro-
nce in compaſſion to the ſufferings of my
th, gave to my declining age, a comfort ſuffi-
t to recompenſe me, for all I had endured.
s precious gift, was you my Auguſta.

" I found you early one morning at my door,
uteous, and ſmiling as a Cherub. How you
e brought there was a myſtery, I could never
elope; but your apparel beſpoke an affluent
ntage, and I regarded you as a depoſit,
ch I ſhould in time be called upon to ſurren-

The faſcinating graces of your infancy ſoon
e an intereſt in my heart; and when added
eſe, I diſcovered that you poſſeſſed the moſt
able diſpoſition, I doated upon you, with the
ounded affection of a fond father.

"The expectation of hearing from your family, withheld me from giving you that account of yourself, which I perhaps ought ſooner to have done; but indeed, I *wiſhed* to conſider you entirely my own; and whilſt I practiſed the delightful employment of forming your mind, I flattered myſelf, that I was alſo providing for your future eſtabliſhment. From your infancy I have annually ſaved a little ſum, which from the ſimple ſtyle in which you have lived, might have proved a ſufficiency for your ſupport, when I am no more. The failure of my banker has deſtroyed this hope, and I muſt leave my Auguſta to that poverty I ſo much dread."—Here the conflict of his mind, impeded his farther utterance.

"Oh my compaſſionate benefactor! my father!" exclaimed Auguſta, throwing herſelf at his feet, "into what agonies has your affecting ſtory thrown me! but my gratitude—my veneration—can they be increaſed, even by the knowledge that your benevolence has cheriſhed and adopted, a miſerable outcaſt! poverty is my inheritance, and I dread it only from the effect it has upon you. Revive my deareſt Sir, recollect that you conquered your own misfortunes, painful as they were, and do not let your poor Auguſta feel a reproach ſhe is unable to bear, that of having renewed them."

"Alas! my child, replied he, the imbecility of age, admits not of the ſtruggles of youth; mine are paſſed, and all the conſolation I can now feel, ariſes from the reflection, that I have imprinted on your mind ſtrong ſentiments of religion, and the love of virtue."

"But come, my Auguſta," continued he in a leſs ſerious tone, "I am exhauſted by my long converſation, and we will now go to ſupper."

CHAP

CHAP. VII.

DURING their repaſt, at which Auguſta ove to be cheerful, although her heart felt as t were breaking, ſhe aſked Mr. Euſton what ame of that brother, whom he had not men- ned in the concluſion of his hiſtory.

"True," ſaid he, "I forgot to tell you that died at Bunkers Hill, on the breaking out of American war: this alſo recalls another cir- nſtance to my recollection which I learnt m Lord Euſton; that he is not the ſon of Miſs nſter, but of the ſecond lady whom my bro- r married. I knew that ſhe had brought him daughter, before I quitted the world, but had t heard that ſhe ſoon after fell into a ſtate of lancholy dejection, which in a few years put period to her life."

When they ſeparated for the night, Auguſta ve full vent to the ſorrow which oppreſſed her art, nor could ſhe prevail upon herſelf to go reſt, until ſhe had ſtolen to the chamber door Mr. Euſton, and convinced herſelf by liſ- ning, of his having fallen into a quiet ſlumber. She quitted her room early, after a night ffed in melancholy reflections. Mr. Euſton as not riſen; ſhe again liſtened at his door, and om the ſilence which reigned in his apartment, ttered herſelf that he was ſtill enjoying a re- ſhing ſleep. She ſuffered two hours to elapſe, pping every ten minutes on tip toe to the foot the ſtairs. Her ſurpriſe, now became mingled th terrour, and aſcending the ſtairs, ſhe gently ened the door, and in an accent of extreme nderneſs ſaid, How do you do my deareſt ſir?

No anſwer was returned her.

She repeated her inquiries ſomewhat louder, but no returning ſound vibrated on her eager ear. She darted down ſtairs, and ruſhing into the kitchen, where the ſervants were aſſembled at breakfaſt, claſped her hands together in an agony of ſpeechleſs terrour, and fell ſenſeleſs on the floor.

The ſervants, who loved her, were in the utmoſt conſternation, and knew not what to do. They poured water on her face, and at length brought her to herſelf. She opened her eyes, looked wildly about her, and exclaimed, "my father!" David, and one of the ſervant women ran inſtantly to his apartment, from whence ſhe returned in a few moments, wringing her hands, and repeating with tears, that he was dead.

"Fly for a Doctor, ſaid Mary; ride David for your life. My poor young Miſtreſs—What will become of her? What indeed will become of us all?"

Auguſta, who had heard the lamentations of the ſervants, had again fainted; and David was in an inſtant on horſeback, and out of ſight.

When Auguſta revived, her whole frame was convulſed, and ſhe ſat ſome moments gaſping for breath; a torrent of tears happily ſucceeded, and at length reſtored her to the uſe of reaſon.

"Mary," ſaid ſhe, "how do you know that he is dead? come with me and let us try if any means can be found to ſtay the ſpirit of the beſt of men?"

She directed her ſteps to his apartment, magnanimity ſtriving with woe, for the predominance in her countenance, and her whole figure giving the idea of an adminiſtering angel.

She took his cold hand in her's. "Can death, ſhe ſaid, look ſo lovely?" ſhe felt his pulſe—

"but,

but, he is gone for ever!" Convinced of this, knelt at his bedſide, and preſſing his hand to lips, bathed it with her tears, which now wed freely.

"Oh my father! my more than father," ſaid ; "now indeed is the moment arrived which u ſo much dreaded for your poor Auguſta! ur foſtering care was all ſhe poſſeſſed in this rld, and deprived of that, ſhe has loſt every ng that could endear it to her. The compaſ- nate benefactor,—the amiable friend!—the tle monitor! is now no more. Can I bear ſurvive him! O God!" continued ſhe, lift- up her ſtreaming eyes with fervency towards ven, "do thou mercifully unite me to that ſſed ſaint, whom I deplore, or enable me to pport the trials I have to endure, with a de- e of fortitude worthy of the leſſons I have re- ved from him, and becoming a creature, whom u haſt endued with reaſon!"

Mary now beſought her to leave the room. No," replied ſhe, "the time will too ſoon ar- e, when I muſt ceaſe to behold him: I will ntinue with him as long as I can."

David inſtead of riding to the market town, ich was at a conſiderable diſtance, had gal- ped to a neighbouring village a few miles off, the hazard of his limbs, where an old man ided, who from an attention to the common ladies of his fellow creatures, had been ena- d to diſpenſe a few domeſtic medicines to his r neighbours, with tolerable ſucceſs, by which ans, his reputation amongſt them, had riſen great height. As he really poſſeſſed a large tion of humanity, David readily prevailed up- him to mount the horſe, by whoſe ſide he ran h uncommon ſwiftneſs.

Mr. Griffiths, who had been told that Mr. Euſton was dead, and that Miſs Denbeigh lay dying, was rejoiced to find *her* in a ſtate which indicated no immediate danger. She beſought him with great eagerneſs to open a vein in Mr. Euſton's arm, but he aſſured her it was to no purpoſe. However, to ſatisfy her, rather than from any hope he entertained, he performed the operation, which as he predicted, had no effect. He then in his turn entreated that ſhe would quit the room, and ſwallow a cordial which he had brought in his pocket.

Obſerving the heavy affliction ſhe endured, he propoſed to her to return with him, until Mr. Euſton's funeral was over, telling her, that his wife and daughter ſhould do their beſt to entertain her.

This kind attention was ſoothing to the dejected ſpirits of Auguſta, and had beſide, the good effect of rouſing her into a recollection of what was to be done. She thanked him with much gratitude, but added, that the cares of ſeeing the laſt ſad duties paid to Mr. Euſton, ſhould devolve on no one but herſelf. He then left her, ſaying that he would call the following day.

CHAP. VIII.

AUGUSTA, with a calmneſs of reſolution which ſurpriſed even herſelf, gave the neceſſary orders to the ſervants; and David was diſpatched to the neighbouring town, both to execute them and to give information of the death of Mr. Euſton to their landlord, whoſe ſon a Clergyman

the

e living was to devolve to, and whom ſhe in-ted to perform the funeral ſolemnities.

On his return David produced a letter direct-d to Mr. Euſton, which Auguſta opened with embling hands, ſo ſuſpicious were ſhe now of eſh misfortunes. It was from Lord Euſton, nd had lain ſome time at the poſt office. He ad written merely to thank his uncle for the oſpitable reception he had given him, and to quire after his health, and that of Auguſta.

This letter convinced Auguſta of what ſhe d ſuſpected before, that it was proper to give timation of Mr. Euſton's death to his family. ut to whom could ſhe write? if to Lord Euſton, ould it not imply a claim upon his protection, if not ſo, expoſe her to a viſit from him, and renewal of his addreſſes? and to write to the arl of Seaton, that unfeeling brother, who in efiance of the ties of conſanguinity, had treat-d her revered friend with ſo much neglect, was moſt as repugnant to her feelings. She debated ng how ſhe ſhould act; and at length, guided her own ideas of propriety, ſhe addreſſed the llowing letter to the Earl.

" My Lord,

" I experience inexpreſſible anguiſh, in re-lling to your Lordſhip's recollection, the me-ory of your brother, the honourable Edward uſton: he never would have permitted it in his e, and it is his death which alone compels me the taſk. He will be buried to-morrow, (for ch were always his deſire,) on that ſpot, where, the exerciſe of thoſe virtues which beſt enno-e the human mind, he had alone found ppineſs.

" He

"He has made a will, and bequeathed all he died poſſeſſed of to me, which I believe, is little more than the furniture of his cottage: if however, your Lordſhip ſhould think, that this ought not to devolve upon a ſtranger, I am ready to renounce it, and to put any one in poſſeſſion, whom you ſhall think proper to impower.

I remain,
Your Lordſhip's
humble Servant,
AUGUSTA DENBEIGH."

On the following day, the remains of the excellent Mr. Euſton, were conſigned, amidſt the tears and lamentations of his dependants, to their laſt earthly manſion.

The ſituation of Auguſta, during this awful ſcene, is not to be deſcribed. The fortitude which ſupported her, whilſt any thing remained to be done, which could ſhow her veneration to her benefactor, now entirely forſook her. She threw herſelf upon his coffin; ſhe beſought him in a ſort of wild agony, not to deſert his child, but to look down from heaven, and bleſs and ſupport her; and was with difficulty torn from it.

The good old Mr. Griffiths, would not leave her that night. He began to fear the effects of her ſorrow; and although he was not endowed with power to offer conſolation, his pity ſoothed Auguſta, who had conſidered herſelf as ſtanding alone in the midſt of the vaſt creation, without one being in it, who would intereſt themſelves about her.

In a few days, ſhe received the following letter from Lord Seaton.

Madam

Madam,

The effects of my brother, whether diſpoſ-
of to you by will, or otherwiſe, are much at
r ſervice; as they muſt be too trivial to en-
e the attention of

Your humble Servant,
SEATON.

The pride and indifference viſible in this let-
ſhocked her extremely; however ſhe ſoon
ed from it to deliberate on the ſteps ſhe had
to take; for ſhe had attempted to form no
, until ſhe had received the Earl's anſwer.
he ſent for the Clergyman, who had by this
taken poſſeſſion of the living, and offered to
the furniture of the houſe; and if he were
rmined to carry it on, the implements be-
ging to the farm; but ſhe told him that Da-
and Mary were going to be married, and ſhe
er wiſhed to give theſe to them, as a reward
their long and faithful ſervices to Mr. Euſ-
if he would conſent to take them to be his
nts. To this he readily aſſented, and thus
guſta, tho' ſo poor herſelf, already made
of her fellow creatures happy.

The terms being agreed upon, between Au-
ta and Mr. Williams, he, his wife and chil-
n, ſoon removed to the parſonage, where ſhe
invited to remain, as long as it was agree-
to her.

he found Mrs. Williams an uneducated wo-
; but ſhe had a ſtrong natural underſtand-
and much ſincerity of heart. David in a
t time had diſpoſed of every thing which re-
ned, and Auguſta found herſelf miſtreſs of
t three hundred pounds.

"I wiſh,"

"I wiſh," ſaid ſhe one day to Mrs. Will
ams, "to go to London, that I may put myſe
in ſome way of getting a livelihood; but
have no acquaintance there. Do you know an
one, to whom you could give me a recommen
dation?"

"Yes, indeed, that I do, (replied ſhe,) fo
I have a ſiſter that lives there, and ſhe is a Mi
liner, and knows all the great folks; and if
were to write to her, and aſk her, 'twould d
you a great deal of ſervice."

"Will you then do me that favour?" aſke
Auguſta.

"If I will not, anſwered Mrs. Williams,
is becauſe I cannot write; but Mr. William
ſhall, which is quite the ſame thing. But yo
muſt tell him yourſelf what you would hav
ſaid."

"I thank you greatly, ſaid Auguſta, and wi
conſider of it by the time Mr. Williams com
in."

That very evening, a letter was written to Mr
Mills, by Mr. Williams, to acquaint her, th
a friend, whom they much reſpected, would b
in town in a ſhort time; and intreating ſh
would do her every ſervice in her power, an
receive her as a lodger in her own houſe.

CHAP. IX.

THE mode in which Auguſta was to travel t
London, was next to be decided upon. Ther
were chaiſes to be had at the market town; bu
no coaches went from thence. Auguſta inquire
wha

hat was the difference between them, and was
d that ſhe would travel alone if ſhe went in a
aiſe, but that coaches accommodated either
ur or ſix perſons, and were therefore conſider-
the moſt pleaſant, becauſe of the ſociety they
orded.

" If that be all," ſaid Auguſta, " I ſhall de-
rmine upon having a chaiſe. The preſent turn
my mind is beſt ſuited to ſolitude; beſides,
w can the company of thoſe perſons who are
angers to each other, be at all agreeable?"

Mr. Williams remarked that travelling in
aches was cheaper.

" That," replied Auguſta, " ought to be a
nſideration with me. Pray are they material-
ſo?"

" No," ſaid Mr. Williams, " I believe not, I
ve never travelled in a chaiſe, but I know that
ach hire comes very high."

" Then," rejoined Auguſta, " I will abide by
y former reſolution."

With an aching heart, ſhe now ſet about the
cking up of her cloaths. Her Piano Forte,
r. Euſton's violin and books, ſhe left in the
re of Mr. Williams. She depoſited her mo-
y and bills, and Mr. Euſton's gold watch, in
cabinet which contained his papers, and this ſhe
refully placed in her trunk.

The evening preceding the day, on which ſhe
as to abandon the only habitation ſhe had ever
own, ſhe viſited every ſpot, which recollection
ld her, had been endeared to her by the pre-
nce of her benefactor. The ſcenes of her hap-
infancy, crouded upon her imagination, and
hen ſhe contraſted them with thoſe ſhe was
w going to enter upon, ſhe felt a ſickneſs at
r heart, and her tottering limbs ſcarcely ſup-

ported

ported her. She at length found herſelf in th
midſt of the peaſants houſes: Mary and Dav
preſented themſelves before her with ſwoln ey
—the reſt of the villagers gathered round her; an
nothing was to be heard but their lamentations.

Auguſta's tears ſtreamed afreſh. "My kin
friends, ſaid ſhe, farewell. Cheriſh the remem
brance of the beſt of men, and the precepts h
taught you"—ſhe could ſay no more. They fo
lowed her, but ſhe waved her hand for them t
go back, and ſtruck into the path that led to th
church yard.

The riſing moon, with her faint beams, gav
a ſoft light to the cloſing day, and ſhone upo
the windows of the church, into which ſhe wa
about to enter. The ſolemn ſtillneſs, and pa
tial gloom of the place, ſtruck horrour thr
her ſoul. She directed her ſteps towards th
tomb ſhe had raiſed over the body of Mr. Eu
ton, when on turning an aiſle, which had hid i
from her ſight, ſhe beheld it illuminated. Th
power of motion forſook her—her reſpiratio
grew ſhort, and her eyes were rivetted upo
it. It was ſome moments before ſhe recovere
herſelf ſufficiently to perceive, that this ſtri
ing appearance was produced by the moon
having juſt riſen high enough in the horizo
for its light to be reflected by the projectin
marble. She now threw herſelf at the foot o
the tomb, hung over it in ſpeechleſs agon
and wet it with her tears. She had indulged he
ſelf in this luxury of wretchedneſs, until th
moon had receded from the window, and th
place was enveloped in darkneſs. Then throw
ing her arms around the cold marble, "O
my father!" cried ſhe, "thy cares, thy a
fection, could not procure for the wretche
Auguſt

uſta, an exemption from the miſeries which await her; but there is a Being, who *can* ect the innocent, and thou wilt not fail upplicate him to be her ſupporter!" She e; and by this confidence in heaven, hed the parſonage in tolerable compoſure.

arly the next morning the whole family e in motion, as Auguſta's departure was l for ſix o'clock. The unevenneſs of the ent from the hill, would not admit of the ſe driving to the parſonage; her portmanteau trunk, were therefore carried to it, and ded by Mr. and Mrs. Williams, David and y followed with her baggage.

hoſe only who have been compelled to quit ot, endeared to them by the recollection very domeſtic enjoyment, can alone judge t were Auguſta's feelings. She frequently ed to catch another view of it, and hard- kept pace with the reluctant ſteps of her nds; but when at length the projection of mountain had hid it from her ſight, ſhe ked haſtily forward, and looking what could not ſpeak, threw herſelf into the ſe.

he ruggedneſs of the road, could not ke her from the reverie in which ſhe was ged, and ſhe arrived at the end of the ſtage, without knowing that ſhe had tra- d a ſingle mile. As horſes had been or- d for her by David, ſhe had nothing to do, than pay the demand for the ſtages. Scarcely were her thoughts more cted, when ſhe arrived at the next town; here ſhe was obliged to exchange the ſe. She begged that the horſes might be

put

put to immediately, and proceeded witho
thinking of dinner. She continued her jou
ney until late in the evening, and after taki
a diſh of tea, retired to reſt.

The conflict of her mind, on the preced
day, had exhauſted her ſo much, that
gained ſome ſleep, and aroſe greatly refreſh
by it. Her chaiſe was ready, and ſhe inſtan
departed

The beauty, and novelty of the proſp
around her, could not fail to attract her noti
As far as the eye could reach, all was in a
ſtate of cultivation. Here were no bar
mountains, or brown heaths; and the fie
were embelliſhed with clumps of trees, j
now beginning to put forth the foliage of
early ſpring. "Ah!" repeated Auguſta to h
ſelf, with a deep ſigh, "if Mr. Euſton h
been the companion of my journey, how
lightful would my ſenſations have been, on vie
ing ſuch enchanting ſcenery."

She had arrived at the end of the ſeco
of that day's ſtages, and was as uſual requ
ing that another chaiſe might be got re
without delay, when the maſter of the inn
formed her that he had not one pair of ho
diſengaged.

"And pray, ſir," ſaid Auguſta, "h
long muſt I wait before they will be at
berty?"

"Until to-morrow morning, replied
man; for if they return early, they won't
fit to travel again, before they have had a nig
reſt."

This threw Auguſta into ſome perplexity;
obſerving that there was a coach waiting

oor, "pray, ſaid ſhe, is that carriage going
ds London?"
Yes, madam," replied the man.
Then I will go in that," ſaid ſhe.
Would you pleaſe to have me ſignify as
to the lady," aſked the man.
By all means," replied Auguſta.
he inn-keeper turned into a parlour, and ad-
ng a lady who ſat at breakfaſt, told her
was a gentlewoman juſt arrived, who
in great haſte to get to London, and as
d no horſes to ſend her forward, ſhe would
ad to go in her coach.
Did not the lady ſend her name?"
No, madam."
Then pray deſire her to walk in."
ady Merton, with good reaſon, ſuppoſing
the requeſt came from ſome lady of her
aintance, who knew her equipage, prepared
lf to grant it, with all imaginable polite-
: but her features underwent a thorough
ge, when ſhe perceived an entire ſtranger
the room.
he aroſe, and courtſeying with great forma-
remained ſilent.
uguſta, whoſe penetration was extremely
k, inſtantly perceived that ſhe had been
y of ſome indecorum. A deep bluſh
d itſelf over her cheeks, and gave to
faded bloom, the luſtre of her former
ty.
Pardon, madam," cried ſhe, "the igno-
of a young traveller, who perceives
ſhe has commited ſome impropriety, and
s not how to offer an apology for ſuch
ſion."

"Call

"Call not that an intruſion," replied L
Merton, much ſtruck with the graceful
of her figure, and the inſinuating ſoftneſs
her manner, "which is capable of giving
much pleaſure. If I underſtand right,
are much diſtreſſed for a conveyance to L
don; and a ſeat in my coach, is much at y
ſervice."

"Your goodneſs, madam," replied Augu
bluſhing ſtill deeper, "is a ſevere reproach
on my own want of reflection, but I beg to
ſure you, that when I ſent ſo ſtrange a meſſa
I apprehended it was to be delivered to ſo
perſon travelling in a ſtage coach; and
that is a vehicle I have never ſeen, the ſig
of yours at the door, did not prevent me fr
falling into ſuch an error."

Lady Merton now ſmiled with great good h
mour, and entreated Auguſta, to partake
her breakfaſt.

CHAP. X.

LADY Merton, her woman, and Augu
were ſeated in the coach, and the converſati
began on the part of her ladyſhip, with an
quiry, how far Auguſta had travelled alone.

"I am unacquainted, madam," ſaid ſhe, "w
the exact diſtance, and if I meaſure it by
own ideas, it will be great indeed! It was ho
ever but yeſterday morning that I quitted the ſp
where every hour of my life has been ſpent; wh
I have enjoyed a degree of happineſs, not of
I believe the lot of mortals, and which I deſp

ver ſeeing again."—Here her tears flowed in
dance.

I am very ſorry, my dear," ſaid lady Mer-
" that I have by my queſtion, revived ſuch
ful ideas."

You have not revived them Madam," replied
uſta, " they are ever preſent to me: my heart
voted to ſorrow."

If I ſhall not indeed then give you additional
" ſaid lady Merton, " I will venture to aſk
he cauſe. Your dreſs tells me that you have
me near relation.—Perhaps you mourn a fa-
?"

No Madam," replied Auguſta, " not a fa-
but a friend, guardian, and benefactor, who
ied to me thoſe relations which I never
."

ere Auguſta, perceiving that ſhe had greatly
ed the curioſity of Lady Merton, related
y to her, that ſhe had been placed in her in-
y, under the care of a clergyman, who re-
in a moſt retired ſituation in North Wales.
dwelt on the exalted benevolence of his cha-
r, and painted with energy the beauties of
abode, and the felicity of their days; " but
eath," continued ſhe, " has thrown a cloud
my future life, thro' which no cheering ray
ars to bid me hope for brighter proſpects."

here is a prevailing force in truth, which the
cannot reſiſt. The eyes of Lady Merton,
eſtified to Auguſta, how much ſhe ſympa-
d in her diſtreſs. She gave her every com-
her power, and for the remainder of their
ey, with a delicacy of attention, ſtrove to
her, by deſcribing the places near which
paſſed.

When

When they changed horſes for the laſt ti
before they reached London, Lady Merton, t
ing Auguſta's hand ſaid, " my ſweet compan
has not yet told me, where ſhe is going; and
cannot do ſo much injuſtice to my feelings, a
ſuppoſe that I am now, unintereſted for her
" Your Ladyſhip's kindneſs is ſo great," a
ſwered Auguſta, " that I fear I muſt have
peared ungrateful by leaving you to make the
quiry. I have letters of recommendation t
Mrs. Mills, a Milliner in Bond Street, in wh
houſe I propoſe to lodge, until I can form ſo
plan for the future."
" If ſuch only are your intentions," ſaid L
Merton, " may I ventured to entreat that you
indulge me with your company for ſome li
time. I find myſelf attached to you by a ſe
ment of regard, which will not ſuffer me to p
with you; and am ambitious of being y
friend."
This propoſal, as unexpected as it was eligi
was accepted with many acknowledgements
Auguſta, who ſoon found herſelf about enter
the metropolis.
The ſtreets, crouded with paſſengers, a
ſplendid equipages, afforded her new cauſe
wonder, in the midſt of which, they were
down at a handſome houſe in Argyle Street.
Lady Merton conducted her gueſt to an apa
ment, which ſhe ordered to be prepared for h
and with true politeneſs, bade her conſider h
ſelf at home.
The next morning when ſhe appeared at bre
faſt, Auguſta's looks were conſiderably improv
and Lady Merton thought her the moſt perf
beauty ſhe had ever ſeen.
" If you pleaſe," ſaid Lady Merton, " we w

at home to-day, both to recover the fatigue
ur journey, and to ſettle ourſelves comforta-
in our new dwelling; and, added ſhe, if you
e any commiſſions for ſhop people, Innes is
g on ſome errands for me, and will execute
rs.

Auguſta took the opportunity which ſeemed
ly deſigned for the purpoſe of leading to the
ect of dreſs; and entreated that Lady Merton
ld favour her with her advice. "I am ſenſi-
added ſhe with a ſmile, that I muſt want
lernizing, but I wiſh that my apparel may be
s ſimple a ſtyle, as is conſiſtent with a viſiter
our Ladyſhip's."

That, anſwered Lady Merton, will beſt agree
your mourning, and we will go into my dreſ-
room, and contrive all about it."

On entering her apartment again, Auguſta per-
ed that ſome ſhelves in a light cloſet, were
d with books, many of which were not how-
new to her, for from the time ſhe was capa-
of being improved by books, Mr. Euſton had
y new publication ſent to him from London,
was ſtampt with the good opinion of the pub-

She thanked Lady Merton when they met at
ner, for this repeated proof of her attention,
ch ſhe ſaid had gratified her highly, as ſhe
particularly fond of reading.

When they returned to the drawing room, La-
Merton recollected that ſhe had not given or-
to be denied, and Auguſta could not conceal
ſurpriſe, when on the entrance of a footman,
y Merton ſaid ſhe was not at home, if any
called.

"You, Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid ſhe, "will hard-
ink any faſhion allowable, which thus gives
nction to a falſehood; but when you have
learn-

learnt, that there are numbers of people in t
great town, who for want of happineſs at th
own houſes, are conſtantly running about to
noy their acquaintance, you will ceaſe to conde
a cuſtom, which, with the appearance of civili
frees you from the perſecutions of ſuch impe
nent intruders.

Auguſta acquieſced in this, and remark
that the laws of ſociety muſt be new, and wo
therefore appear ſtrange, to ſuch a novice as h
ſelf.

"True," ſaid Lady Merton, "but good bre
ing is innate. It is the reſult of good ſenſe, a
good humour; and I queſtion whether ſociety
gained much, by the artificial manners it has i
poſed; for we know that ſincerity has ſo little
do with thoſe, that in doubting of part, we
apt to include the whole."

Auguſta ſeemed to view a Harpſichord wh
ſtood in the room, with ſome degree of attenti
which led Lady Merton to aſk her if ſhe und
ſtood muſic.

"I have been accuſtomed to play a little," a
ſwered ſhe, "what my kind benefactor tau
me."

"I am fond of muſic," ſaid Lady Mert
"will you try that inſtrument?"

Auguſta ſat down to it, and ran over t
keys in ſo elegant a manner, as ſurpriſed La
Merton.

"Whoſe compoſitions have you been u
to play my dear?" ſaid ſhe, giving her ſo
books.

Auguſta mentioned ſeveral, but added that
would try to get thro' any her Ladyſhip wiſhed
hear, as ſhe hoped to find no difficulty in playi
new leſſons.

S

he performed ſo admirably, that Lady Mer-
s aſtoniſhment increaſed. " Pray tell me my
Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid ſhe, " what other
gs you have acquired a knowledge of, beſides
ic."

I have learnt drawing," anſwered Auguſta he-
ingly, " French and Italian.—Mr. Euſton was
preceptor in each."

I do not wonder that ſolitude was pleaſant
ou," ſaid Lady Merton, " ſince you were poſ-
d of ſo many charming reſources; and I am
ſt tempted to regret, that our youth of both
s are not brought up in a ſimilar way; ſince
r time is divided by ſo many frivolous pur-
, that one hardly ever ſees them excel in any
g."

y this time ſeveral tickets were brought to
y Merton. " See," cried ſhe, " the repre-
atives which we now ſend to make our vi-
"

Surely," anſwered Auguſta, " this muſt at
be a ridiculous cuſtom, for what advantage
be gained by an intercourſe ſo carried on?"

It ſerves to give people of faſhion a general
vledge of each other," replied Lady Merton,
ables them to fill their rooms at a route; and
luces to an exchange of compliment, when
meet at public places: And are not thoſe to
onſidered as valuable privileges my dear?"
uſta ſmiled; and they ſoon after ſeparated for
night.

CHAP. XI.

IF Lady Merton was charmed with Augu
ſhe was not leſs ſo with her new friend. Her
dyſhip was in fact a moſt amiable woman,
highly reſpected by all her acquaintance.

When they met at breakfaſt, Lady Merton ſ
"we will take an airing this morning, and d
thro' ſome of the principal ſtreets, that you
have a better idea of the opulence of this
town. I have beſides another motive which l
me out: I wiſh to pay the reſpect of an early
to Miſs Merton. To this Lady," continued
"my ſon is to be united, on his return from
travels. A ſingular circumſtance happened in
family of Lord Merton. The chief part of
eſtates became divided from the title, and is
centered in this young Lady, who is a relat
My departed Lord, and her father felt mutu
the wiſh that a marriage ſhould take place betw
them, that the ſplendour of the family migh
revived; and they have been deſigned for
other, from their infancy. My ſon is a moſt
ble young man, and I hope the diſpoſition
Miſs Merton is equally ſo; but ſhe was ſpoile
the indulgence of her father, and ſince his de
her ideas of her own importance are rathe
creaſed, than diminiſhed. I love my ſon,"
ſhe ſighing, "ſo much, that I muſt own this
me pain; but I flatter myſelf, that when he
comes her huſband, the example of his man
will reform her's. His father," continued
the tears ſtarting in her eyes, "has been
five years, and he comes of age in a few mon
when I expect him home."

Aug

guſta bowed her thanks for this little piece
mily hiſtory, and to divert the melancholy
which it had thrown Lady Merton, ſhe
d her port folio, and ſpread ſome drawings
her, ſaying at the ſame time, "theſe my
adam are different views which I took, of
illage I lived in, tho' I fear they will give
better idea of it, than my ſimple deſcrip-

They are very highly finiſhed," ſaid Lady
n, "and your colouring is exactly nature.
ublime muſt ſuch ſcenery be? I have ſcarce-
any thing ſo romantic."
narrow valley, along which Mr. Euſton,
ta, Lord Euſton, and Mr. Devereux had
, the laſt evening the two latter ſpent with
particularly excited Lady Merton's admi-
and ſhe aſked Auguſta to copy it for her.
iew Auguſta had taken the day following
departure, and had embeliſhed it with four
, intended as a repreſentation of their little

ſt they were thus employed, Mrs. Syden-
was announced, who entered exclaiming,
dear Lady Merton, how exceſſively happy
o ſee you! I flew to you the moment I
of your arrival! How are you? When
u come to town?" Then turning to Auguſ-
made a low courteſy.
came here the day before yeſterday," re-
ady Merton; "but give me leave to intro-
y friend Miſs Denbeigh to you."
ord," continued Mrs. Sydenham, after
paid her compliments to Auguſta, "how
our Ladyſhip think of remaining ſo long
country? We have longed to have you

amongſt us; indeed I have talked of no one
for this laſt fortnight."

"You are very obliging," ſaid Lady Mer
"Pray how is Mr. Sydenham?"

"Very well I thank you my dear Lady M
ton," anſwered Mrs. Sydenham, "but I pr
I have not ſeen him to-day. Pray do you g
the Opera to-night? I have room for you
Miſs Denbeigh in my box."

"I ſhall not go to-night," anſwered Lady M
ton, "but ſome other time, I ſhall be glad t
cept your kind offer."

"Oh! you know you may command m
all times," replied ſhe; "but by the way,
muſt abſolutely promiſe to attend my concer
Tueſday.—I will take no denial."

"Then," anſwered Lady Merton, "I w
leaſt have the merit of a ready compliance."

"Thank you," ſaid Mrs. Sydenham,
your coach, I know, is in waiting, I will no
tain you. Good morning to you ladies."—
ſhe ran out of the room.

"Pray, Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lady Me
"how do you like your firſt town acquaint
Mrs. Sydenham?"

"If I had no other cauſe to like her mad
replied Auguſta, "her attachment to you, w
be a ſufficient one."

"Her attachment to me my dear! d
really believe ſhe has an extraordinary degr
regard for me?"

"What elſe am I to underſtand from th
tering expreſſions ſhe made uſe of," ſaid A
ta,

"Not their literal meaning, I aſſure
replied Lady Merton. "Mrs. Sydenham
woman of faſhion, and a woman of the w

the ſame intereſt ſhe takes about me, ſhe pro-
s to feel for all her acquaintance, who are ſo
nerous, that ſhe would ſoon fall a martyr to
ſenſibility if it were really unaffected."

They now proceeded on their morning ramble,
Auguſta inquired if they ſhould go near Bond-
et.

"We can go there," replied Lady Merton,
you wiſh it."

"The letter I have for Mrs. Mills, is my mo-
for wiſhing it," ſaid Auguſta.

Lady Merton pulled the ſtring, and directed
coachman to the milliner's. When they ar-
d at her houſe, Auguſta alighted, and deſired
peak alone with Mrs. Mills. She preſented
letter to her and informed her of the comfort-
ſituation in which ſhe had left her ſiſter.
. Mills after ſhe had read it, aſſured Auguſta,
ſhe ſhould be happy to ſerve and oblige her,
he beſt of her power."

"At preſent," ſaid Auguſta, "I am a vi-
to Lady Merton, but when I leave her,
all depend madam upon your obliging promi-
"

They found Lady Merton in the ſhop, who
employed herſelf in purchaſing, and giving
ers.

They drove next into Groſvenor-Square,
ere Miſs Merton reſided, and on Lady Mer-
's giving her name, were conducted into Miſs
rton's dreſſing room, who was at breakfaſt.
aroſe to receive them, and when Lady Mer-
preſented Auguſta to her, ſhe juſt viewed
with a vacant ſtare, and ſunk down again
n the ſofa.

"Have your Ladyſhip breakfaſted?" ſaid ſhe.
"Yes," replied Lady Merton, "theſe two
rs, for it muſt be now near two o'clock."

" It is impoſſible," cried Miſs Merton, "
get to bed before five o'clock. Indeed early ho
are my averſion."

" But will not ſuch very late ones injure y
conſtitution ?" aſked Lady Merton.

" Not at all," anſwered Miſs Merton, for
later I ſit up, the greater flow of ſpirits I poſſe
and nothing does me ſo much harm I think,
the ſight of the ſun."

Lady Merton gave a look of inquietude to A
guſta, and then aſked Miſs Merton what
been her engagement the preceding evening.

" I proteſt," ſaid ſhe, " I can hardly reme
ber where I was; but I finiſhed at the Duch
of Weſtmoreland's ball. Don't you pity m
continued ſhe, turning haſtily to Auguſta, but
ſurveying her as before; " Lady Betty Ca
ton has a maſquerade to night, and Mrs. Fortes
gives a moſt ſplendid ball."

" I am ſorry madam," anſwered Augu
" that you are too much fatigued to attend ei
of them."

" My God !" exclaimed Miſs Merton, " h
you miſtake me ! the difficulty of attending bo
is what diſtreſſes me. Here if I go firſt to
maſquerade, how am I to get dreſſed prope
and in time for the ball; and if I go to the
firſt, I ſhall be engaged for ſo many dances,
I ſhall loſe the maſquerade.

" Yours is a moſt terrible dilemma, my dea
ſaid Lady Merton, perceiving that Auguſta
at a loſs what reply to make, " but as we m
infer from your ſolitude, that both places
likely to be pleaſant, why cannot you give
one, that you may have a full enjoyment of
other ?"

" Lo

" Lord, ma'am!" ſaid ſhe, "how can you
nk of ſuch a thing? beſides being ſeen but by
f the number of people, I ſhould not be able
ſhew both my dreſſes.—Then pauſing for a
moments, ſhe added, all that I can do is, to
directly to Lady Dunbar, who is to chaperon
to the maſquerade, and prevail upon her to
for me till two o'clock; for I poſitively can-
go to the ball before twelve. And then riſing,
rang the bell, and without any ceremonious
ntion to her gueſts, ordered her chair to be
eadineſs. Lady Merton, and Auguſta, took
r leave; and the former could not conceal
chagrin ſuch folly gave her.
n the evening Auguſta complained of a head-
; and as Lady Merton expectedviſitors, ſhe
ained permiſſion to retire to her chamber ear-

CHAP. XII.

AUGUSTA aroſe the next morning ſo much
iſpoſed, that ſhe could not accompany Lady
rton to hear divine ſervice, who was very un-
y at her illneſs.
" I have ever enjoyed good health," ſaid Au-
ta, "but I have been uſed to the open air,
to walk a good deal. Perhaps the want of my
uſtomed exerciſe, may occaſion this little indiſ-
tion."
" Undoubtedly it does," ſaid Lady Merton,
and I ought to have thought of it. You ſhall
lk out my dear every morning."

"If your Ladyſhip pleaſes then," replied Auguſta, "it ſhall be before breakfaſt, for that is what I am uſed to; and my early riſing, will enable me to be back again, before your breakfaſt hour."

"By all means," ſaid Lady Merton, "and I will inſtantly order John to be ready to attend upon you early every morning."

She accordingly took a walk the following morning, between nine and ten o'clock, and was back again, before Lady Merton was down ſtairs; who was ſo much pleaſed to find her better, that ſhe inſiſted upon her perſeverance.

Tueſday, the day of Mrs. Sydenham's concert was now arrived, Lady Merton, and Auguſta prepared to attend it. Auguſta, for the firſt time in her life, ſet to a hair dreſſer, and her light, ſhining hair, was ornamented with a bandeau of black love ribbon only. They were ſet down at Mrs. Sydenham's door, about eleven o'clock, and found the rooms full of company. Mrs. Sydenham ſeemed the happieſt of human beings, in having her friends thus about her; and after the ladies had paid their compliments to her, and Auguſta had been introduced to Mrs. Sydenham, they took their ſeats in the concert room.

The band was very full; and the effect produced by ſo many inſtruments, gave Auguſta much pleaſure; but as ſhe perceived that every body elſe heard them with indifference, ſhe aimed, in appearance, to do the ſame. In thoſe intervals when the muſic ceaſed, the company became clamorous on the ſubjects of the day: Auguſta however had no temptation to join in the converſation, for the Lady who ſat by her, looked at her with ſuch repulſive coldneſs, that ſhe had not courage

ourage to addreſs her. At length Mr. Syden-
am made his way to her, and leaning on the
ack of her chair, ſaid loud enough to be heard
y the ſurrounding company, we are indebted to
ady Merton, for having graced our room with
ich beauty, as claims the admiration of every
eholder!

This extravagant compliment, threw Auguſta
nto great confuſion, which was increaſed when
n raiſing her eyes, ſhe perceived that a ſuperci-
ous ſmile was directed to her, by her fair neigh-
our.

"Have you been well entertained Miſs Den-
eigh?" ſaid Mr. Sydenham.

"Greatly ſir," replied ſhe.

"I need not aſk you," ſaid he, "if you are
ond of muſic; the expreſſion of your counte-
ance tells me that you are."

"Your judgment in phyſiognomy, is not diſ-
credited by the conjecture," replied ſhe, "but
cannot conceive what the rule is, on which you
found your obſervation."

"Then I will tell you," returned he; "your
features indicate ſenſibility, which is congenial
to the ſounds of harmony."

"Perhaps," ſaid ſhe ſmiling, "you are leſs
fortunate in your conjecture now than you were
before."

"Then," replied he, lowering his voice, and
affecting to ſuppreſs a deep ſigh, "you will in-
flict miſery not to be endured"

Auguſta began to think her former ſullen
neighbour greatly preferable to the new one ſhe
had gained, when the renewal of the concert
relieved her, by obliging Mr. Sydenham to be ſi-
lent: But what was her ſurpriſe, when on look-
ing up, ſhe beheld Lord Euſton at ſome little diſ-

tance. The ſight of him renewed ſo many painful ideas, that ſhe ſat abſorbed in deep melancholy, and neither heard the muſic, nor Mr. Sydenham, who frequently exclaimed, "charming!" in order to draw her attention.

The concert was now finiſhed, and Lord Euſton approached, in order to pay his compliments to Mr. Sydenham; and Auguſta's unſocial neighbour, throwing a deal of animation and good humour into her face, cried out, "O Lord Euſton! you ſhould have been here theſe two hours ago.—The muſic has been divinely performed I aſſure you."

He was going to make ſome reply, when his eye caught Auguſta. "Good God!" exclaimed he, "is it poſſible that I have really the happineſs of beholding Miſs Denbeigh?"

She bowed, but was unable to ſpeak. The dejection of her countenance, and her being in deep mourning, gave a ſort of indication of his uncle's death, which he had not heard of. He longed to aſk her a thouſand queſtions, but felt himſelf reſtrained, by the fear of giving her pain, and therefore confined himſelf to the inquiry of how long ſhe had been in town.

About a week, was the anſwer. Mr. Sydenham was all attention to this ſcene; and the lady who had before addreſſed Lord Euſton, again cried out, "I have been dying to ſee your Lordſhip ever ſince the maſquerade. You don't know I ſuppoſe, that it was me, who told your fortune?"

"No indeed," replied he, "nor did you foretell the happy event which has befallen me to night, or I ſhould have fallen down and worſhipped you."

Here

Here they were joined by Lady Merton, who inquired of Auguſta, how ſhe had been entertained, and perceiving by her replies that ſhe was diſcompoſed, attributed it to a return of her headach, and therefore told her, ſhe was ready to attend her home. Mr. Sydenham offered his hand to Auguſta, to the great mortification of Lord Euſton; and the ladies departed without his being able to ſay any thing more to Auguſta. He did not however neglect to aſk Mr. Sydenham, where Miſs Denbeigh reſided, who told him, and with truth, that he had never ſeen her before that evening.

On their return home, Lady Merton again expreſſed her ſolicitude for Auguſta's health.

"Indeed, my dear madam," ſaid ſhe, "I am not ill; but I was thrown into extreme agitation by the ſight of Lord Euſton, who is nephew to my beloved, and lamented benefactor."

"And are you acquainted with him?" aſked Lady Merton.

"He paid a viſit once in Wales," replied Auguſta, "and but a few months before the death of Mr. Euſton, which was the circumſtance which chiefly affected my mind. I perceived," added ſhe, "that he is ignorant of the loſs I have ſuſtained, and I had not courage to tell him."

"Well, but my dear," ſaid Lady Merton, willing to divert her from ſuch melancholy reflections, "tell me if you were really pleaſed with the evening you have paſſed."

"With the muſic madam, I have been exceſſively delighted; but not ſo, with the other part of my entertainment. I was ſeated by a lady who regarded me with ſo frigid a countenance, that I durſt make no effort, at a converſation with

with her: and when Mr. Sydenham ſtationed himſelf by me, I was doomed to hear ſuch extravagant encomiums, as quite diſconcerted me. I proteſt to you my dear Lady Merton, he almoſt made love to me."

"If he has not done ſo already," ſaid Lady Merton laughing, "I dare ſay he will; Mr. Sydenham is a man of gallantry, ſo take care of yourſelf."

"I can hardly believe that your Ladyſhip is ſerious, "anſwered Auguſta; for ſurely a married man, with ſuch a character, would find it difficult to gain admiſſion into the firſt ſocieties.

"You are miſtaken my dear," ſaid Lady Merton: "The chief recommendation for that, is *wealth*. People do not now give themſelves the trouble of inquiring after the *morals* of their acquaintance."

Ah! thought Auguſta, how juſtly did Mr. Euſton eſtimate the evils of poverty! "Your tacit neighbour," continued Lady Merton, "has her excuſe, in the cuſtom of the day, and I ought to take all the blame on myſelf, for not having introduced you. An introduction, is not intended ſimply to ſay who you are, but extends a permiſſion to well bred-people, to converſe together." Miſs Felton is a lively good humoured girl, as you will find when you are acquainted."

After a little more chat, they retired to their own apartments.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

SLEEP did not ſoon viſit the eyes of Auguſta. Her thoughts were employed in a buſy retroſpection of paſt ſcenes, and a compariſon of them with the preſent Society, ſuch as ſhe had ſeen, afforded no equivalent to the ſimple joys of rural life. She had met with no character which could intereſt her, except Lady Merton; and which way ſoever ſhe turned her thoughts, they were ſtill embittered with undiminiſhed regret, for the loſs of Mr. Euſton.

She aroſe early, and attended by Lady Merton's footman, took a walk in St. James's Park. As ſhe was returning home, ſhe was alarmed by the cry of, "a mad dog!" and perceiving one of thoſe animals running along the ſame ſide of the Street on which ſhe was, ſhe almoſt flew to the other, and turned down the firſt Street that preſented itſelf. Here, ſeeing a door open, ſhe darted in, and was ſoon in a parlour, where ſat Lord Euſton, at breakfaſt. Her fright at firſt made her inſenſible to every thing but her ſafety; but when ſhe was aſſured of that, ſhe felt a conſiderable degree of mortification, at having thus, tho' ſo undeſignedly, thrown herſelf into the protection of Lord Euſton.—She inſtantly made an effort to depart.

"My dear Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid his Lordſhip, "you are not yet ſufficiently recovered. ——Pray be ſeated; I will conduct you whereever you ſhall direct, when you are more compoſed."

She

She told him, that a ſervant of Lady Merton's was in waiting, ſuppoſing that he had actually followed her; but the man, who had been as much alarmed as Auguſta, inſtead of attending to her, had conſulted the means of his own preſervation, and ran back to the ſhop of a green-grocer, whom he knew. As ſoon as he perceived that the danger was paſt, he began to feel aſhamed of his deſertion of Auguſta, and ſuppoſing ſhe had gone ſtrait forward to Argyle-Street, ran as faſt as he could to overtake her.

When Auguſta was informed that the ſervant was not there, ſhe begged to have a chair called directly, which Lord Euſton did not dare to refuſe, tho' he evidently betrayed an inclination to detain her.

The chair was ſoon procured, and Lord Euſton was putting her in it, and giving directions to the chair-men, to go to Lady Merton's in Argyle-Street, when Mr. Devereux preſented himſelf at the door. He made way for the chair unperceived by Auguſta who had drawn the curtains, and ſtood motionleſs with ſurpriſe. Lord Euſton however, ſoon brought him to himſelf, by calling out in high ſpirits, "why Devereux, are you turned to a ſtatue?"

"Not ſo," anſwered he, with an embarraſſed air, "I came here with an intention of ſitting an hour with you, but I had juſt recollected an engagement which had before eſcaped my memory, and was at that moment debating, whether I muſt not give up the pleaſure of ſeeing you."

His emotion did not eſcape Lord Euſton's obſervation, who readily conjectured the cauſe, and

and whoſe vanity was ſo highly gratified by it, that he could not reſtrain the pleaſure it gave him. Mr. Devereux, on the reverſe, ſeemed never in a worſe frame of mind, for enjoying the exuberance of Lord Euſton's good ſpirits, and repeating his excuſe, left him haſtily.

Mr. Devereux had returned but lately from the continent, on ſome family buſineſs, and was to ſet out again for Vienna the following morning. He had brought letters for Lady Merton, from her ſon, who was at that court; but having been much engaged, had not been able to call upon her, to tell her the day of his departure, until that morning. Anxious to repair his neglect, by giving her all the time he then had in his power, he went to her houſe early, in expectation of finding her at breakfaſt. The ſervant informed him ſhe was not yet come down ſtairs, therefore he ſtepped into the parlour, to leave a note. He had written it, and was about to leave the room, when his eyes caught the ſight of two drawings which lay upon the table, and which ſeemed done in a maſterly manner; one was in an unfiniſhed ſtate; he took up the other, and to his great amazement, beheld the narrow valley with over-hanging rocks, and the rapid ſtream, by the ſide of which he had walked with Mr. Euſton and Auguſta; his heart too, told him that the drawing was her's, and he involuntarily preſſed it to his lips; but the means by which it came there, excited his utmoſt curioſity. Could Mr. Euſton and Auguſta be in town? His heart throbbed at the idea. On looking at the drawing again, he obſerved the happy party, whom Auguſta had intro-

introduced: He knew each, and could not help remarking, that he was placed by the ſide of Auguſta, inſtead of lord Euſton, who had actually detached her from himſelf and Mr. Euſton. This trifling circumſtance gave ſuch a ſweet ſenſation, as left him no longer a ſtranger to the impreſſion ſhe had made on his heart. Scarcely could he reſiſt the temptation he felt, to carry off the prize: The ſight of her port folio, reanimated the deſign, and he examined it, in hopes of finding another copy. In turning over the papers, he found a miniature portrait of Auguſta. Almoſt trembling through joy, he ſeized this, placed it carefully in his pocket book, and quitted the houſe. When he was in the Street, he began to reproach himſelf, for not having made ſome enquiries of the ſervant who had let him out; but on recollecting that Lord Euſton could give him fuller information, he directed his ſteps to his houſe, and arrived there juſt in time to witneſs, what he conceived to be, a ſecret viſit from Auguſta: and it was this, which occaſioned the mortification, that Lord Euſton had ſo plainly perceived.

When Auguſta arrived at Lady Merton's, ſhe perceived the footman was waiting at the door, with much ſhame and confuſion in his countenance. On her quitting the chair, he beſought her not to mention the circumſtance to his Lady, telling her, he ſhould be diſcharged, and probably be deprived of the means of getting his livelihood if it ſhould be known. The benevolence of her heart readily led her to pardon his behaviour, and to ſet his mind at eaſe by giving him a promiſe that Lady Merton ſhould remain unacquainted

quainted with it. This promiſe obliged her to conceal the whole of the adventure ſhe had met with.

As Lady Merton and Auguſta were about to ſeparate, in order to dreſs for dinner, a ſplendid equipage drove to the door, and Miſs Merton ſoon entered the room. She courteſied with much ceremony, to both ladies, and without ſpeaking took a ſeat.

"The happineſs I feel at ſeeing you my dear," ſaid Lady Merton, "receives a conſiderable allay, from the appearance of langour which your countenance wears.——Are you well?"

"Lord, madam," exclaimed Miſs Merton, how you mortify me! "if I do appear at all fatigued, it muſt be from the extreme hurry I have been in, to get here before your Ladyſhip's dinner hour."

Lady Merton hurt at this reply, remained ſilent; and Auguſta, to fill up the chaſm in the converſation, told Miſs Merton ſhe hoped ſhe had not been diſappointed in her intention of attending both Lady Betty Caſtleton's maſquerade, and Mrs. Forteſcue's ball.

"No," ſaid ſhe; ſurveying Auguſta, as ſhe anſwered her, "I did contrive it, for I have no idea of giving up any thing my heart is ſet upon."

"Then," ſaid Lady Merton, "you will not refuſe me a requeſt, in which I aſſure you mine is much intereſted. I am," continued ſhe, "making up a pacquet for my ſon, which is to go to-morrow morning; and what I have to beg is, that you will give me a few lines to incloſe within it."

"La!

"La! madam," cried Miſs Merton, "if you tell him I am well, it will be the ſame as if I wrote."

"You would feel much reſentment, and with cauſe too," replied Lady Merton, "if you believed ſo."

"But I hate writing," ſaid Miſs Merton; "and Lord Merton ſhould be ſatisfied with hearing from me in any way that is moſt agreeable; but however ma'am, to oblige you, I will ſcribble a note to him."

Whilſt ſhe was employed in writing, Auguſta in her turn, now that ſhe could do it, without the appearance of impertinent obſervation, ſurveyed Miſs Merton's figure. She was tall and thin, and therefore her deportment, which ſhe intended ſhould be highly dignified, was extremely formal. The chief expreſſion of her countenance, was that of conſcious ſuperiority; hence ſhe had loſt all ſweetneſs of manner, and whenever ſhe meant to confer a civility, did it with an affected humility, which deſtroyed the compliment, by the obligation it ſeemed to impoſe. Auguſta had juſt determined, that with more eaſe, and affability, Miſs Merton might have been both elegant and engaging; when ſhe aroſe from the table, and preſented an envelope to Lady Merton, ſaying, "this naſty writing had almoſt made me forget that I wiſhed to engage your ladyſhip to dine with me next Saturday, and I hope Miſs Denbeigh will accompany you. I ſhall dine early, added ſhe, becauſe I know you are not uſed to late hours; ſo pray don't be later than ſeven."

Soon after this engagement was arranged, Miſs Merton took her leave; having as ſhe proteſted, a million of places to call at.

Lady

Lady Merton had engaged a box at Drury Lane Theatre, for that evening; and being anxious that Auguſta ſhould ſee the whole of the performance, the repreſentation of which was ſo totally new to her, they repaired thither immediately after dinner.

CHAP. XIV.

LADY MERTON and Auguſta, had not long left Argyle-Street, before Lord Euſton arrived; on being told that Miſs Denbeigh was from home, he commiſſioned his ſervant, to learn whether ſhe was to be found at any of the public places of reſort; and hearing with great pleaſure that both the ladies were gone to Drury-Lane Theatre, he inſtantly drove thither.

When Lord Euſton entered Lady Merton's box, the firſt act was juſt concluded; and he inſtantly beheld in Auguſta's countenance, all the delight ſhe had experienced from this new ſpecies of entertainment. He inquired with much apparent anxiety, if ſhe had recovered her fright, and told her of his having been in Argyle Street, where he had learnt that ſhe was at Drury Lane. Auguſta did not forget what Lady Merton had ſaid to her the preceding evening, and immediately introduced Lord Euſton to her Ladyſhip, who then took his ſeat by Auguſta. The play was Shakeſpear's, "As You Like It," in which he ſeems to have ſtudied to do juſtice to the delicacy, and diſintereſtedneſs, of female character. It was in fact, Auguſta's favourite comedy, although when ſhe had read it, ſhe had not eſtimated as now, the ſweet and intereſting friendſhip

ſhip of Roſelind and Celia; unexperienced as ſhe then was, ſhe had fancifully imagined, that ſuch ſcenes were *often* to be met with in the world; and finding her own heart capable of the ſame generous exertions, ſhe could not heſitate to believe that they were the general inmates of the female boſom. A very ſhort intercourſe with this world, had convinced her of the fallacy of her concluſion; but the deſcription was too delicious, for her to part with it entirely: and when ſhe ſaw ſuch affecting images, thus realized before her, it ſeemed to authorize her former opinion, and to reſtore her to thoſe ſcenes of rural ſimplicity, which her imagination delighted to recall.

She was indulging herſelf in this happy retroſpection, at the end of the play, when in one of the oppoſite boxes, ſhe beheld Mr. Devereux! he had been ſome little time in the houſe, and one of the firſt objects his eyes had caught, was Auguſta. She had from that moment engaged his whole attention, and he obſerved the pleaſure which animated her countenance, whenever ſhe converſed with Lord Euſton. He was gazing at her in an attitude of deep thought, when ſhe firſt ſaw him, and evidently perceiving that ſhe knew him, he quitted his own party, and joined her's.

All the gaiety of Auguſta's heart had forſaken her, and when Mr. Devereux entered the box, and accoſted her, her features bore marks of ſtrong dejection. What he ſaid was ſpoke ſo low, and ſo inarticulate that Auguſta attempted no reply; he therefore turned to Lady Merton, and told her that he had intended calling at her houſe, when he quitted the Theatre, to receive the packet,

ket, with which he was to be intruſted, for Lord Merton.

"And you ſtill, I hope," replied Lady Merton, "will have the goodneſs to purſue your deſign. We ſhall ſtay the entertainment, which Miſs Denbeigh wiſhes to ſee, and then I ſhall try to prevail upon you to accompany us home."

"If I thought your Ladyſhip would not accuſe me of caprice," ſaid Auguſta, "I ſhould venture to retract thoſe wiſhes, which I know are your ſole inducement for ſtaying."

"By no means," anſwered Lady Merton; "I have no choice: therefore whatever is moſt pleaſant to you, will be ſo to me."

"I think, then, madam," ſaid Auguſta; "that my attention is fatigued for the preſent; ſo if you pleaſe, we will return home."

Lady Merton, Auguſta, and Mr. Devereux accordingly quitted the Theatre, to the great chagrin of Lord Euſton, who could not conceal his diſappointment: It was however ſomewhat alleviated, when in going acroſs the lobby, Auguſta told him, that if he had leiſure the next morning, ſhe would be glad to ſee him for ten minutes.

When they arrived in Argyle-Street, Lady Merton retired to make up her packet, and left Auguſta and Mr. Devereux together. A ſilence of ſome moments enſued, during which Mr. Devereux appeared abſent and ſpiritleſs. Auguſta ſaid in a low and tremulous voice, "Has Mr. Devereux been informed of the death of his excellent friend Mr. Euſton, that he thus ſeems to ſympathize with me, on ſuch an irreparable loſs?

"Is Mr. Euſton indeed dead!" exclaimed Mr. Devereux.

Auguſta anſwered him only with tears. "Good God! Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid he, approaching her with inexpreſſible emotion, "how you ſurpriſe me! believe me, my heart ſhares in the diſtreſs of your's."

Auguſta ſtill remained ſilent. He took her hand, which he preſſed between his, and then added, if it be not too preſumptive—if the man before you, could render you any ſervice—But no, that honour belongs only to Lord Euſton and his family."

"To the family of Lord Euſton," replied Auguſta, "I am an entire ſtranger," withdrawing her hand from his; "and with his Lordſhip I have no further acquaintance than Mr. Devereux has witneſſed: Therefore," added ſhe, with a look of dignity, "from him I neither expect, nor can receive any obligation."

Mr. Devereux in his turn, was now ſilent, and Auguſta, fearing that ſhe had given him cauſe for diſpleaſure, ſaid with great ſweetneſs, "the intereſt which Mr. Devereux is ſo good as to ſhew for me, demands my gratitude; and I ſhall perhaps make the beſt return to his kindneſs, by informing him, that Lady Merton extends both her protection and friendſhip to me."

"Amiable and lovely Miſs Denbeigh!" replied Mr. Devereux, "how I adore the condeſcenſion which can thus relieve my apprehenſions, and pardon my preſumption. Oh! that I could but prove to you the ſolicitude I feel for your happineſs! the conflict of the preſent moment, is more than I am able to bear. I ſhall ſee you no more, for many months, perhaps years—and I leave you in a ſituation, where beauteous, and unſuſpicious of deceit as you are, you will conſtantly be ſurrounded with dangers—"Alas!' replied

replied Auguſta, interrupting him, "ſhort as my acquaintance with the great world has been, I have already ſeen enough to detect its hypocriſy; but I will bear in remembrance the hint you have given me, and learn to be ſuſpicious of my own judgment, and cautious how I adopt that of others."

"Oh Miſs Denbeigh!" ſaid Mr. Devereux, "the exalted ſentiments of your own pure boſom, I both know and reverence"—again continued he, "exert the benevolence of your heart, and forgive the fears of danger with which I I have inſpired you; your felicity is dearer to me than my own, and inconſiſtent as I am, I know not what to dread"—He walked about the room in great diſorder, and Auguſta, although ſhe did not comprehend his meaning, was too much affected to attempt a renewal of the converſation, before Lady Merton returned; who ſtrove to detain him to ſupper, but he pleaded the many things he had to arrange previous to his early departure the next morning, and in a melancholy voice, bade them adieu.

CHAP. XV.

LORD Euſton reached Argyle-Street, by twelve o'clock, and was ſhewn into the breakfaſt parlour, where Auguſta waited to receive him. The ſolemnity of her manner, threw ſome damp, upon the high ſpirits, with which he firſt accoſted her; and as ſoon as they were ſeated ſhe ſaid, "we have met each other three times

my

my Lord, without having once mentioned the name of your excellent uncle; an omiſſion I could not have been guilty of, had not the places been ſo improper for the information I had to give you: I therefore entreated the favour of this viſit, that I might aſk, if you are yet a ſtranger to his death?"

"Totally ſo," replied Lord Euſton. "Your preſence in London, indeed, and your dreſs, gave me ſuſpicions which I durſt not inquire into."

Lord Euſton ſpoke truly. His father had given him no intimation of the death of Mr. Euſton, and when he firſt ſaw Auguſta at Mrs. Sydenham's concert, he ſuſpected the event, which had really happened: but when he met her afterwards, his joy at ſeeing and converſing with her, was ſo unbounded, that he thought of nothing elſe.

"I wrote to Lord Seaton," ſaid Auguſta, attempting, tho' ineffectually, to reſtrain her tears, "I thought it right to apprize him of the death of his brother. He ſent me this anſwer, which ſeems to imply a doubt of the exiſtence of a will, which I beg leave to ſhew your Lordſhip.—Here it is."

"Good God!" my dear Miſs Denbeigh, exclaimed Lord Euſton, "do you ſuppoſe that I will receive further proof than your word? or that if his property was not deviſed, I would ſuffer you to be deprived of one atom of it?"

Auguſta bowed, and ſaid, "Of all the family of my beloved benefactor, you ſir are the only one who ſeem united to him by the ties of affection, ſuffer me therefore, to reſtore this gold watch to you. It is uſeleſs

to

to me; and I ſhall feel gratified by knowing that it is worn, and valued, by his nephew."

This watch was remarkably curious and beautiful; Mr. Euſton having purchaſed it, during his travels in Germany.

"It is a treaſure," replied Lord Euſton, "which I ſhall prize beyond any thing I poſſeſs in this world; but which I, nevertheleſs, can receive on one condition only."

"What is that?" ſaid Auguſta.

"The replacing it with another," anſwered he.

"That I cannot permit," replied Auguſta, "I have no occaſion for ſuch an ornament; and you beſides hurt me, by propoſing an exchange for a gift, which I preſent to you, in the name of your uncle."

"The gift you preſent," ſaid Lord Euſton, "is of ſo much value, that an acknowledgement is all I dare attempt; and if you deprive me of making one, you will of accepting the other." So ſaying he took the watch, kiſſed it, and put it in his pocket.

Auguſta riſing, ſaid ſhe muſt now attend Lady Merton. Lord Euſton entreated her permiſſion to call upon her again, and took his leave. He almoſt flew to his own houſe, ſo full was he of a project which he had thought of the moment he took Mr. Euſton's watch from Auguſta. He ſummoned one of his ſervants and ordered him to get poſt horſes inſtantly, and be ready to convey a letter he ſhould have to ſend by him. This letter was for Mr. Devereux; which he flattered himſelf would overtake him before he left Dover, and contained a requeſt, that his friend would purchaſe for him, one of the moſt elegant ladies watches he could meet with at Pa-

ris, and ſend it by the firſt conveyance. As the meſſenger was ordered to travel night and day, he overtook Mr. Devereux before he ſet ſail, who read the letter, and with a deep ſigh, bade the ſervant aſſure his maſter, that he would pay the utmoſt attention to his commands.

The next evening Lady Merton was to receive company, and Auguſta underwent the ceremony of introduction to a number of perſons whoſe names ſhe had never heard before. Indeed the only faces ſhe knew, were thoſe of Mr. and Mrs. Sydenham, and Miſs Felton.

When the card parties were arranged, Auguſta was left unemployed; which Miſs Felton no ſooner perceived, than ſhe left the loo table, and proteſted ſhe would bear her company. Auguſta remonſtrated in vain, for Miſs Felton's complacency was not to be overcome: At length ſhe ſaid with a ſmile, "you know not, madam, the pleaſure you may perhaps deprive me of, by detaching me from making obſervations on the game, for I aſſure you, that until this evening, I have ſcarcely ſeen a card, and never played one." "Really," replied Miſs Felton, "why I thought cards were played all over the world! however I can tell you, there is no ſort of pleaſure in looking on, for all the enjoyment of the game, is to have a vaſt deal of money at ſtake."

"You ſurpriſe me," ſaid Auguſta, "more than I have done you. Is it poſſible that large ſums are depending upon the caſt of thoſe pieces of paper?"

"Large ſums!" replied Miſs Felton; "why no, one could not ruin one's ſelf here; but there are places in town where people may get rid of the incumbrance of a large fortune in one night."

Auguſta

Auguſta was going to aſk an explanation, when Mrs. Sydenham came up to her, crying, "Lord, my dear Miſs Denbeigh, are not you engaged at cards, I am quite miſerable to ſee you unemployed."

"I remain ſo madam," replied Auguſta, "becauſe I am totally ignorant of the game, nor do I even know if I may venture to inquire, if you have been fortunate."

"Oh! certainly," anſwered ſhe. "But I have loſt every thing. That is the five points, and ten guineas which I bet on the rubbers, into the bargain."

Mrs. Sydenham now left them, to join her party, and a gentleman approached, whom Auguſta had not ſeen before. "Here is my brother," exclaimed Miſs Felton, preſenting Sir William Felton to her, "I began to think you ate."

"I feel now that I am ſo," replied Sir William, bowing to Auguſta, "and regret the moments that I have loſt."

"Miſs Denbeigh does not play cards," ſaid Miſs Felton, "and we have been tête à tête, this half hour."

"You have been very good," anſwered Auguſta, "and I fear I have ſacrificed your own muſement, to contribute to mine."

"Oh no!" ſaid Miſs Felton, "cards are my verſion, I aſſure you."

"Why then," aſked Auguſta, "do you play hem?"

"Becauſe," anſwered Sir William, "Arabella s enough of the fine lady, to prefer being in he faſhion, to any ſelf gratification whatever."

"Indeed," retorted Miſs Felton, "you do ot do my complacency the juſtice it merits;

for I only wiſh to avoid being alone in a multitude."

The converſation was now interrupted by Mr. Sydenham, who intreated Sir William to take his ſeat at the card table, which he preſently did: Miſs Felton too, quitted Auguſta to ſpeak to a lady of her acquaintance, and then Mr. Sydenham ſaid, "I hope I ſhall be well received for having relieved you from ſo ſad a boor, as this inſipid brother and ſiſter, who are little better than Automatons, ſince not only their motions, but even their ideas, are regulated by the caprice of faſhion."

Auguſta very much ſurpriſed at the freedom with which he ſpoke of thoſe, who appeared to be numbered among his friends, looked at him ſome moments before ſhe replied, and then only ſaid, "I do not know enough of Sir William, and Miſs Felton, to decide upon their characters, but I muſt own they do not ſeem to merit the ſevere remarks you have made upon them."

"Oh! you have that indeed yet to find out;" ſaid he, "tho' it is poſſible you never may, ſince *you* are ſure of being followed by admiring crowds wherever you go, which is a certain ſecurity, as it is indeed the only one of their attention."

"Are you not trying to impoſe upon my credulity?" ſaid Auguſta; "ſurely it is improbable that rational Beings, ſhould think, and act, as well as dreſs, from the influence of faſhion. Beſides, ſtranger as I am to them, their behaviour to me can only be the reſult of good breeding, or a compliment to Lady Merton, whoſe viſiter I am."

"In the laſt circumſtance," ſaid Mr. Sydenham laughing, "you have certainly found the cauſe, you have derived a conſequence in their eyes from

from your introduction by Lady Merton, which neither your beauty or exalted merit, could ever have given you; and you will find that their attention to you, will be guided by that of others. But," continued he, obſerving that Auguſta ſeemed at a loſs how to reply, "how great will be your triumph over them, in the adoration your charms will excite! And here if I am not miſtaken, comes a candidate for your favour, whom I already dread as a rival."

Lord Euſton, who had juſt entered the room, now approached, and paid his compliments to Auguſta, they were immediately joined by Miſs Felton, and ſoon afterwards by Sir William.

The converſation now became general to Lord Euſton's great mortification, who could not detach Auguſta from the party during the remainder of the evening. Miſs Felton took leave of Auguſta with a profuſion of civilities; and Sir William with ſo many high flown compliments, as gave Lord Euſton an uneaſy pang in his boſom.

CHAP. XVI.

THE next morning Miſs Felton called upon Auguſta by her own appointment, to go to Kenſington-Gardens. Sir William ſhe ſaid had rode into Hyde-Park, and would join them there; and Lady Merton having other engagements, Miſs Felton and Auguſta proceeded without her. The

morning was lovely, and Auguſta was quite enchanted with the walks, which, as is common at this ſeaſon, were full of company. Miſs Felton, informed her who every lady was, and indeed they ſeemed almoſt all to be of her acquaintance; as they frequently ſtopped to ſpeak to different parties, Auguſta was greatly embarraſſed to hear audible whiſpers of inquiry about herſelf, and equally ſo at the unreſtrained manner, in which the gentlemen of Sir William's acquaintance ſeemed to obſerve her. Tired of ſuch ſcrutiny, more than the length of the walk, ſhe ventured to hint a wiſh of returning home, which was immediately aſſented to by her companions. As they were leaving the Gardens, Miſs Merton was about to enter with a party of her friends. Mutual civilities were exchanged between Sir William, his ſiſter, and them; and Auguſta unwilling to be deficient in reſpect to Miſs Merton, who did not ſeem to obſerve her, approached and paid her compliments. Miſs Merton looked at her, as if trying to recollect who ſhe was, and then ſuddenly dropping a courteſy thanked her, and paſſed on.

"Pray," ſaid Miſs Felton, when they were ſeated in the coach, "are you not acquainted with Miſs Merton?"

"I have ſeen her but twice," replied Auguſta, "and then only for a few moments."

That evening Lady Merton again took Auguſta to the Theatre, which place ſhe aſſured her, ſhe preferred to every other.

The following day, was the one appointed for their viſit to Miſs Merton, at whoſe houſe they arrived before ſhe was ready to receive them. The dinner was ſerved in a ſuperior ſtyle to any thing

Auguſta

Auguſta had yet ſeen; and indeed, there ſeemed through the whole, a ſtudied diſplay of unneceſſary ſplendour, as the dining party conſiſted only of three ladies. When they returned to the drawing room, Miſs Merton ſat down to a very fine Piano Forte, and gave them ſome leſſons, and a ſong. During the performance of theſe, ſeveral viſiters arrived, who however entreated the indulgence of hearing her play. When ſhe at laſt aroſe, Lady Merton, who from the natural goodneſs of her heart, felt anxious that Auguſta's excellence might be known, told Miſs Merton, that ſhe hoped ſhe would try to prevail upon Miſs Denbeigh to take her ſeat; who immediately yielded to the ſolicitation. As ſhe played, the words, "charming!" "Braviſſimo!" were repeated by a gentleman who ſeemed a connoiſſeur, inmuſic, which however was ſo far from encouraging her, that it diſtreſſed, and rather made her play worſe. During her performance, Miſs Merton had taken a ſeat, by one of her viſiters, and had affected great attention during the firſt movement, but then ſhe ſuddenly entered into loud chat, with her friend, on ſome very lively ſubject as it ſeemed, for they both laughed immoderately. This interruption did not prevent Colonel Beauclerc from aſking Auguſta if ſhe did not alſo ſing. Lady Merton replied for her, and hurt at the rudeneſs of Miſs Merton, was determined to puniſh her further for it. She ſung a favourite Opera air, which ſhe had learnt ſince ſhe came to town; and part of her audience at leaſt, ſeemed pleaſed with her voice. Whilſt ſhe was receiving their acknowledgements, Miſs Merton aroſe, and ſaying coldly that ſhe was much obliged to her, ſhut the Piano Forte.

More company now arriving, card tables were placed; and Miſs Merton was buſily employed in arranging her parties, when Sir William Felton, and Miſs Felton were announced. Whilſt they were paying their compliments to her, Colonel Beauclerc came up and ſaid, "for God's ſake my dear Miſs Merton, tell me who this ſyren is, whoſe powers of faſcination are ſo various, and ſo ſtrong?"

"If you mean Lady Merton's protegée," replied ſhe, "I really have no further knowledge about her, than that her Ladyſhip picked her up on one of the Welch mountains."

"Well," ſaid Miſs Felton, "I always fancied there was ſomething extremely ruſtic about her, yet who could have believed that Lady Merton would introduce a perſon whom nobody knew. I am really exceſſively vexed, for I took her with me, as you ſaw to Kenſington-Gardens, and all my acquaintance are curious to know who I had with me."

Sir William only ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and Colonel Beauclerc had haſtily quitted them and returned to his ſeat by Auguſta. Miſs Merton approached and juſt aſked her to play cards, which ſhe declined, aſſigning as an excuſe, her total ignorance of any game. She then importuned Colonel Beauclerc, to make one of a party at loo, which he alſo excuſed himſelf from; being determined not to loſe the ſociety of Auguſta, whom he ſoon perceived from his knowledge of the company, would be the only one who ſat by. This gentleman had been particularly ſtruck with the beauty of Auguſta, and her ſkill in muſic, had made a double intereſt in his heart. He had found means to *engage* her in converſation, by introducing that ſubject, and was not leſs delighted with the

the eaſe and elegance of her manners. He readily ſaw that ſhe was unknown to moſt of the company, and therefore had applied to Miſs Merton, to learn who ſhe was. The reply he received, had operated differently from what had been intended by it; and convinced him of the ſuperior excellence of Auguſta. Born of a noble family, he was leſs tenacious of rank, than thoſe whoſe pretenſions were more equivocal; and his liberal mind gave to extraordinary merit, the pre-eminence over adventitious endowments. He now entered again into converſation with her, and ſhe was pleaſed to find him the ſenſible well-bred man of faſhion.

During all this time, neither Miſs Felton, or Sir William had taken the leaſt notice of Auguſta; who much ſurpriſed at it, at length ſaid, "I muſt go and ſpeak to Miſs Felton." Her reception was ſo cold, that ſhe would have felt pained from the apprehenſion of having committed ſome indecorum, had not the character Mr. Sydenham had given her that moment occurred to her recollection; and ſhe ſaw that from the diſtant civility of Miſs Merton, ſhe had ſuſtained a proportionate loſs, in that of Miſs Felton. Unwilling to obtrude, ſhe returned to her ſeat, and remained in converſation with Colonel Beauclerc, until Lady Merton roſe to depart.

So unpleaſant had the evening been to Auguſta, that ſhe returned home ſpiritleſs and fatigued. Lady Merton perceived it, and expreſſed her fears that late hours, and hot rooms, by no means agreed with her. She aſſented to this; rather chuſing to ſuffer Lady Merton to remain in her errour, than give the moſt diſtant cauſe of ſuſpicion, that ſhe had been hurt by the apparent unkindneſs of Miſs Merton.

In looking over the tickets which had been left, Lady Merton found a letter for Auguſta, who ſoon afterwards retiring to her apartment, on opening it ſaw the ſignature of Lord Euſton.—The contents were as follow.

" It is in vain that I purſue you, with the hope of finding a moment to declare to you the unalterable ſentiments of my heart. You are either from home, or ſurrounded by people whoſe preſence impoſes ſilence. Suffer me therefore, moſt adorable of your ſex, in this manner, to ſupplicate a revocation of thoſe cruel words, which forbade me to hope that you would ever liſten to my vows. You are releaſed from thoſe obligations, which your too grateful heart, then dwelt upon; and I am under none, which ought, or can interfere, in the exquiſite happineſs of calling you mine for ever. You are dearer to me, than the very air I breath, and equally neceſſary to my exiſtence. In pity therefore, tell me that you but wiſh me to live, and I ſhall remain, your moſt grateful, devoted, and adoring—

EUSTON."

Auguſta was much ſhocked at the perſevering aſſiduities of this thoughtleſs young man. She long ſat ruminating upon his letter, and as ſleep was effectually driven from her eyelids, ſhe took up her pen, and anſwered it as follows.

MY LORD,

" I am equally ſurpriſed and grieved, at the purport of your letter; for I flattered myſelf, that abſence, and reflection, had enabled you to conquer

quer an ill judged partiality. Be aſſured that the motives which induced me to decline liſtening to you before, have ſtill, and *ever will have*, the ſame weight with me. I reſpect Lord Euſton as the nephew of my benefactor—I wiſh to preſerve a place in his eſteem, and to give to him an equal ſhare of mine.—But more than that, can never be granted by his obliged humble ſervant,

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH."

She now ſought for reſt on her pillow, but in vain; and when ſhe attended Lady Merton at breakfaſt, her countenance too plainly told the ſleepleſs night ſhe had paſſed.

CHAP. XVII.

LADY MERTON and Auguſta paſſed the whole morning, without the interruption of viſiters; and her Ladyſhip juſt as they were about to part to dreſs for dinner, ſaid, "I have promiſed Mrs. Sydenham to ſpend the evening at her houſe, with a ſelect party of friends; but if you my dear Miſs Denbeigh do not feel well enough to accompany me, I will ſend my excuſes."

"By no means, my deareſt madam," replied Auguſta, "there is no reaſon for that; I muſt be much worſe than I really am, before I could ſuffer you to give up your engagement; and I ſhall be very happy to attend you." She affected to look in ſpirits as ſhe ſpoke this, and taking up her

her work, quitted the room. As ſhe aſcended the ſtairs, ſhe heard a loud rap at the door, and haſtened forward, congratulating herſelf that ſhe had made her eſcape, before the entrance of viſiters.

Previous to their departure for Mrs Sydenham's, Lady Merton told Auguſta that ſhe had a viſiter that morning, which ſhe placed to her account.

"From whom? pray madam," ſaid Auguſta bluſhing; for ſhe concluded it was Lord Euſton.

"From Colonel Beauclerc," replied ſhe.

"Is he not my dear Lady Merton, one of your acquaintance?"

"He is my dear Miſs Denbeigh; but ſtill you were the avowed motive of his viſit."

"How ſo madam? He knows nothing of me."

"He has, I believe," ſaid Lady Merton, "ſeen too much of you for his repoſe. In ſhort my dear, to keep you no longer in ſuſpence, he acknowledged as much to me, and came here to learn from me, to whom his propoſals might firſt be communicated, with propriety. I told him of your having been educated under the care of Mr. Euſton, brother to the Earl of Seaton; but that the death of your guardian had left you miſtreſs of yourſelf; and he is eager to expreſs his admiration of you in perſon."

"I am ſorry, very ſorry," replied Auguſta, "that he honours me with ſuch diſtinguiſhing regard; for I never can return it."

"Colonel Beauclerc my dear," ſaid Lady Merton, "is a moſt amiable man. He is beſides of the firſt family in England, being nephew to the Duke of Somerſet; you will therefore conſi-

der

der all the advantages of ſuch an eſtabliſhment, before you decline it."

"I am too grateful for the honour his preference does me," replied Auguſta, "to accept of it, without being able to beſtow upon him in return, an equal degree of affection; which is alas! out of my power."

"You will give me leave to infer then," ſaid Lady Merton ſmiling, "that your heart is beſtowed elſewhere."

"Do not conclude ſo, my dear madam," replied Auguſta; "I really am not deſigned for high life; educated in the utmoſt obſcurity, I can receive no enjoyment from an intercourſe with the great world; and the utmoſt of my ambition is to be favoured with your friendſhip, and to paſs my days in retirement."

"I will not wound you," anſwered Lady Merton, "by calling theſe ſentiments romantic; but my friendſhip for you is ſo great, that I cannot ſuffer you to reject ſo advantageous a propoſal, without taking more time to conſider of it. Colonel Beauclerc is not a boy, and an attachment ſuch as his, is moſt likely to promote your felicity. His application to me, convinces me, both of the ſolidity of his underſtanding, and the ſtrength of his affection."

"I will ſuppoſe," anſwered Auguſta, "that Colonel Beauclerc's partiality is as great as your Ladyſhip deſcribes it, ſince nothing elſe could induce him to think of an obſcure young woman, who is without fortune, or a ſingle connexion in life, which can countenance his preference except yours. And ſhall I then, merely to aggrandize myſelf, for I can be biaſſed by no other ſentiment, act ſo diſhonourably as to owe an exalted ſtation to his generoſity, when the only return I can make

make him, an affection as pure as his own, is totally beyond my power? Ah madam! what a life of miſery, muſt a life of ſuch diſſimulation be!"

"Still," cried Lady Merton, "this averſion to Colonel Beauclerc, inclines me to ſuſpect ſome preference elſewhere! If that has no exiſtence, but in my fancy, your gratitude would ſoon be converted into love."

"When an acceptance in the firſt inſtance would convict me of ſuch ſelfiſh conduct, I ſhould be too much degraded in my own opinion," replied Auguſta, "to be anſwerable in future, for that rectitude, from which I had ſo glaringly ſwerved. What I know of my own heart, I will ſincerely avow to your Ladyſhip. It is, I firmly believe, free from that ſort of attachment, to which you allude; but I own, that when I think of Colonel Beauclerc, I cannot avoid making a compariſon, by which he is greatly the ſufferer. This preference, is however produced by no expectations. The object of it has never given me reaſon, even to ſuſpect that he regarded me with partiality, and is as much above my wiſhes, as he is my hopes."

"You are very ingenuous!" exclaimed Lady Merton, "how much I admire the delicacy of your ſentiments, and the rectitude of your principles. Indeed my dear Auguſta," continued ſhe, "I know not any family to whom you would not do honour."

"Oh madam!" ſaid Auguſta, her eyes filled with tears, "this approbation from you, is indeed moſt dear and ſoothing to me! and ſince I am ſo fortunate as to receive it, allow me to hope that you will have the goodneſs to put a

ſtop

ſtop to the further addreſſes of Colonel Beauclerc."

"That, my love," anſwered Lady Merton, "would be improper and uncivil. I have referred him to yourſelf, and the refuſal muſt now come from you. I am ſorry I gave him the hopes I did, becauſe his diſappointment will be the greater: But indeed I could not reſtrain myſelf from doing juſtice to the character of my fair friend, and I told him I ſincerely wiſhed that he might call ſuch a treaſure his. He knows that we are to be from home this evening, and has therefore deferred his viſit to you, until to-morrow morning. But come," continued ſhe, "it is time to go to Mrs. Sydenham's, the coach I hear has been at the door ſome time. They arrived ſo late at Mrs Sydenham's, that two parties were engaged at cards, and Lady Merton was ſat down at the third table. Auguſta's courteſy to Miſs Felton, was returned by a diſtant bow, which Mr. Sydenham, who was at play in the ſame ſet, did not fail to obſerve.

"Auguſta having her work box with her, preſently ſat down, and began to amuſe herſelf with it. She had not however long purſued her employment, before Lord Euſton entered the room, and took his ſeat by her. In the confuſion of her thought, ſhe ſcarcely lifted her eyes, up to him; but finding that he ſat totally ſilent, ſhe at length thought it right to ſay ſomething, and aſked him in a low voice, if he did not join the card parties."

"No," was all his reply, but he ſpoke in ſo melancholy a tone of voice, that ſhe involuntarily looked at him, and perceiving a great alteration in his countenance, inquired if he was unwell."

"The

"The body," replied he, "muſt ſympathize with the mind, where that is completely miſerable. Your compaſſion," continued he, "is withheld from me, and the deſpair I feel will ſoon remove the object of your averſion."

"Talk not thus," ſaid Auguſta, extremely affected; "indeed Lord Euſton you do me injuſtice; the unfortunate partiality you honour me with, makes my unhappineſs, as much as it does your own."

"Impoſſible," cried he! "Oh that you did but feel the hundredth part of the agonies which I do!"

"If it can indeed gratify you to know that I do, receive that ſatisfaction," replied Auguſta. "You behold me poor, unknown, and but for Lady Merton, unfriended. Theſe are calamities that muſt give ſome degree of pain to my boſom; and when to them, is added the reproach of having inflicted miſery on the nephew of my preſerver, I almoſt ſink under the preſſure of my misfortunes. Oh my Lord! that you would conquer this fooliſh paſſion! then might I, under the diſintereſted name of friend, look up to you for advice and comfort, you, who have witneſſed how dear I was to the moſt valuable of men?"

"Gracious heaven!" ſaid Lord Euſton, "can I bear to hear this, from the lips of Miſs Denbeigh? Oh adored object of my regard! if you will not ſuffer me to avert from you the evils you have mentioned, never again ſhall my complaint be added to your ſufferings. Let me but enjoy the friendſhip you offer, and teach me how I can beſt deſerve it."

"There," ſaid Auguſta, "ſpoke the kindred ſpirit of the beſt of men! how would he have gloried

gloried in the magnanimity of his relation. This generous reſolution my Lord, relieves me from ſo much diſtreſs, and gives me ſuch convincing proof of the goodneſs of your heart, that my eſteem and gratitude are inviolably your's."

"Without your eſteem," replied Lord Euſton, "life would not be worth preſerving."

"Talk not ſo," ſaid Auguſta. "The conſciouſneſs of having performed our duty, is the ſweeteſt ſolace we can receive, when we ſtruggle with diſappointment. Your family—your rank in life, demand that you ſhould act nobly; and the keeneſt remorſe would I know, in time be your portion, if reflection told you, you had acquitted yourſelf unworthily."

"Whilſt I hear you," anſwered he; "I am almoſt charmed to a forgetfulneſs of what I ſuffer. But my paſſion will have its paroxyſm, and I will leave you whilſt I have reſolution to tear myſelf away."

"Auguſta gave him her hand, and looked the approbation ſhe dared not expreſs.—He ſighed, and departed."

She ſat ſome little time deeply abſorbed in thought; and might have remained ſo much longer, had not Mr. Sydenham rouſed her from her reverie. "I have been miſerable," ſaid he, "to be with you; and have execrated both the cards, and party I have played with, for depriving me of a happineſs I prize ſo highly. But tell me my dear Miſs Denbeigh, why you are ſo grave?"

"I know not that I am ſo," anſwered Auguſta. "Pardon me," replied he, "but I have watched you for ſome time paſt, and I thought the attention of Lord Euſton, ſeemed to give you diſpleaſure."

"I am

"I am ſurpriſed," ſaid Auguſta, much hurt to find that he had obſerved her, "that you could take any intereſt in the converſation which paſſed betw een Lord Euſton and me."

"And why ſurpriſed? Do not all that know Miſs Denbeigh take an intereſt in all that relates to her? or, added he ſighing, am I ſo ſingularly unfortunate that I cannot detach my thought from her, for even a moment."

As Auguſta knew not what to reply to this ſtrange addreſs, ſhe remained ſilent; and Mr. Sydenham, putting a very different conſtruction upon her embarraſſment, continued to expreſs, in very vehement terms, his admiration of her. At laſt ſhe ſaid, "Is this proper l anguage for the huſband of Mrs. Sydenham to uſe to the friend of Lady Merton?"

"That I am the huſband of Mrs. Sydenham, I have never ceaſed to regret," replied he, "ſince I became acquainted with you; but that title, thank heaven, does not debar me from the power of reſcuing you from a dependance on Lady Merton's frowns—He was proceeding, when Auguſta, who in his want of reſpect evidently ſaw that he had received ſome information reſpecting her ſituation, and conjectured that it had been conveyed by Miſs Felton, aroſe from her ſeat, and fixing her eyes ſteadily upon him, ſaid, "when Mr. Sydenham took upon himſelf to guard me againſt the caprice of faſhion, he ſhould alſo have prepared me to expect the freedom of ſuch an addreſs, that I might have ſhunned a houſe, the maſter of which, dares to avow ſuch principles of libertiniſm."—She immediately repaired to the table where Lady Merton was engaged, by the ſide of whom ſhe had not ſtood many moments, before

before ſhe fell ſenſeleſs on the floor, in a fainting fit.

The conſternation became general, and Lady Merton's anxiety had almoſt reduced her to the ſame ſituation. By the aſſiſtance of hartſhorn, Auguſta at length recovered, but nearly relapſed again, on finding herſelf in the arms of Mr. Sydenham. Lady Merton entreated that chairs might be inſtantly ſent for, and apologizing to Mrs. Sydenham, for leaving her before ſupper, departed with Auguſta. She upbraided herſelf, for having been the cauſe, of taking Miſs Denbeigh out, when ſhe appeared ſo unwell; and when they got home, had her put directly to bed, and ſat by her, until Auguſta perſuaded her, that ſhe felt an inclination to ſleep. She tried indeed to compoſe herſelf, but could not; the tranſactions of the day, had agitated her frame too much; and it was not the inſult ſhe had received from Mr. Sydenham, which had alone reduced her to ſuch a ſtate, but the repetition of diſagreeble occurrences. Now that ſhe was left entirely to her own reflection, ſhe began to view her unhappy ſituation in a ſtronger light than ever; unconſcious of artifice, and therefore unprepared to oppoſe it, ſhe ſaw all the dangers to which ſhe was expoſed. She had offended no one by an aſſuming demeanour, and her behaviour ſhe was ſure had been free from that levity, which encourages diſreſpect; yet ſhe had met with mortifications, which the moſt arrogant pretenſions could alone deſerve, and encountered unwarranted freedoms, where ſhe had expected to be treated with attention and regard. If ſuch were the evils, which generally attended an intercourſe with the faſhionable world, how *ſmall* a counterbalance, did its pleaſures afford? If her own unprotected

ſituation

ſituation alone produced them, ought ſhe not again to ſeek ſafety in obſcurity? She reaſoned with herſelf, whether Lady Merton ſhould be made acquainted with Mr. Sydenham's conduct, or not. It pained her to give a check to the pleaſant intercourſe, which ſubſiſted between their families, yet ſhe thought ſhe owed to her friend the diſcovery of ſuch an inſidious character; and in ſuch perplexing reflections as theſe, did poor Auguſta paſs the night.

CHAP. XVIII.

AUGUSTA's penetration, although ſo newly exerciſed, had not deceived her. Miſs Felton, who arrived at Mrs. Sydenham's a full hour before Lady Merton did, and probably with a deſign of diſcloſing it, related as ſhe ſaid, the whole hiſtory of Miſs Denbeigh. She declared ſhe had learnt from a relation of Lady Merton's that ſhe was ſome low wretch, whom her Ladyſhip had been ſo romantic as to educate; and added, ſhe was ſure ſhe was an Hypocrite, and affected great reſerve of manners, becauſe ſhe dared not do otherwiſe. This information, Mrs. Sydenham declared, "ſhe could not have believed, if it had not been ſo well authenticated; but that Lady Merton had weakneſſes which all her friends ſaw, at the ſame time that they overlooked, and pitied them." As for Mr. Sydenham, he could hardly conceal the ſatisfaction this recital gave him, and therefore left the diſcuſſion of it to the ladies, whilſt

whilſt he contemplated how he could beſt employ it to his own advantage. He had been ſtruck with the beauty of Auguſta from the firſt moment he had ſeen her; but not knowing her real ſituation with reſpect to Lady Merton, he had not dared to harbour deſigns, for which he might be made accountable, in a manner not altogether ſo pleaſant to his feelings: but now that he found her unprotected, and a dependant, he harboured no doubt of his ſucceſs, and had no fears which could deter him from the attempt. His declarations had however been rather premature, for ſo ſkilful a practitioner, but they had been drawn from him by the obſervations he had made on Lord Euſton, whom he plainly perceived to be devoted to Auguſta, and who, he believed, could entertain no ſerious attachment for a girl of mean parentage, and a *toad eater*.

Lady Merton entered Auguſta's apartment on tip toe, and was ſurpriſed to find her up and dreſſed. She expreſſed concern at her having quitted her bed, and would hardly conſent to her going down ſtairs to breakfaſt. "My dear Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid ſhe, as they ſat together, "I can no longer conceal the apprehenſions I feel for you; you appear really ill, and ſomething muſt be done for the recovery of your health."

"Since your Ladyſhip is ſo good as to expreſs ſo much ſolicitude for me, replied Auguſta, "I will venture to own to you that I ſuſpect I ſuffer from too much buſtle, and keeping of late hours. If you will allow me to remain at home, whilſt you partake of the amuſements your friends hold out to you, I dare ſay I ſhall ſoon grow well."

"Whatever you think neceſſary to the re-eſtabliſhment of your health," ſaid Lady Merton,

"I ſhall

" I ſhall joyfully ſubſcribe to, even tho' it deprives me of the pleaſure of your ſociety: but my dear, I ſhould think a little quiet amuſement would rather be of ſervice to you, and you ſhall yourſelf dictate, what it muſt be.

" You are very good, madam," replied Auguſta, " but indeed it will be better for me to give up going abroad entirely."

" It is ſo extraordinary a wiſh at your age my love," ſaid Lady Merton, " that I can hardly think it originates in a want of health. I by no means deſire to know any ſecrets, which you may not chuſe to diſcloſe; but if it is poſſible for me to mitigate the uneaſineſs which I ſee preys upon you; you may command me to the extent of my power."

" Dear Lady Merton," replied Auguſta! " how your goodneſs affects me! Indeed I have not a ſecret I would withhold from you. It is true there are ſome circumſtances, which do at preſent diſtreſs me. Lord Euſton is a ſource of great uneaſineſs to me; and there is alſo a friend of your Ladyſhip's, whoſe conduct has particularly diſpleaſed me. Lord Euſton," continued ſhe, " during the viſit he made to his uncle, declared a partiality to me, which I did the utmoſt in my power to check. I can feel no further regard to him, than what is due from me, to the nephew of Mr. Euſton, and had I even ambition and pride to gratify, a connexion with his family, is the laſt thing I ſhould think of, ſince I know enough of the character of the Earl of Seaton, to be convinced, that he would look with contempt upon any woman, as a wife for his ſon, who united not all the ſplendid advantages of birth and fortune: Lord Euſton,"

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continued ſhe, "has a good heart, but he is too thoughtleſs to judge of the conſequences of his imprudence. His perſeverance makes me unhappy, becauſe I ſee that his health viſibly declines; and it is dreadful to occaſion miſery one cannot relieve. He promiſed me laſt night, that I ſhould hear no more of his paſſion; but I believe the beſt ſecurity I have for it, is to keep out of his way."

"You act with your uſual good judgement, my dear Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lady Merton, "in declining, for the preſent, the addreſſes of this young man. I know that his father is the moſt haughty, and ambitious of men; and that Lord Euſton would incur his everlaſting diſpleaſure, if he was to diſappoint his views. His daughter by his firſt lady, who is a moſt charming woman, and who poſſeſſed a large fortune in right of her mother, had an attachment to Captain Ameſely, nephew to the Earl of Mortimer; but he never would have given his conſent to the match, had not the death of Captain Ameſely's two couſins put him in poſſeſſion of the title and eſtate. I had a ſlight knowledge of the firſt Lady Seaton; ſhe was a moſt beautiful woman, and it was ſaid ſhe had ſacrificed another attachment, for his title; they lived I believe extremely unhappy for a few years, when ſhe was ſuppoſed to have died of a broken heart. But," added ſhe, "you have yet but half finiſhed the confidential hiſtory, you are ſo good as to favour me with: you ſaid another friend of mine, had contributed to make you unhappy."

"Yes, madam," replied Auguſta, "and I mentioned him with concern, becauſe he is your friend: but I think I ought not to conceal from you,

you, that Mr. Sydenham is capable of ſuch diſhonourable conduct."

"Mr. Sydenham," ſaid Lady Merton, "is what the world calls a man of gallantry, but ſurely he has not dared to inſult you, whilſt you are under my protection?"

Auguſta related all that had paſſed between them, and Lady Merton's aſtoniſhment only gave place to her reſentment. She lamented that the contempt of an individual would be of no conſequence to a man ſo generally received in the world, and declared ſhe would never mix in ſociety with him again, until Auguſta hinted at the ſuſpicions it might occaſion to Mrs. Sydenham, whoſe domeſtic comfort it might for ever deſtroy. After a pauſe Lady Merton ſaid, "I came to town to ſettle ſome buſineſs preparatory to the arrival of my ſon. It is finiſhed, and I have no longer a motive to keep me in London. We will therefore immediately ſet out for the country, for indeed my ſweet friend I cannot live without you! this will releaſe us both from our embarraſſments; and I hope reſtore your health. I have only to ſee Miſs Merton, and prevail upon her to come to Merton Lodge after the birth day; and I will go directly, that we may take our departure to-morrow morning."

Auguſta expreſſed her gratitude in the livelieſt terms, and Lady Merton ſoon after left her.

She had not been gone long, before Colonel Beauclerc arrived. He ſeemed much ſhocked at the ſtate in which he found Auguſta; for the roſes had forſaken her cheeks, and a ſickly langour had taken poſſeſſion of her features. His inquiries had all the tender ſolicitude of love, and in the full confidence of ſucceſs, he made an avowal of his paſſion, Auguſta was ſoon ſufficiently recollected

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to expreſs her acknowledgements for the high honour he did her; and to aſſure him, that invincible obſtacles prevented her acceptance of it. His affection was too fervent to be chilled by a firſt refuſal, and he pleaded againſt it with all the eloquence which love is apt to inſpire. Auguſta's firmneſs at length convinced him that his hopes were unfounded, and he bade her a very melancholy adieu.

She now rang, to deſire no more viſiters might be let in; but her orders were given too late, for Lord Euſton that moment entered the room.

"Oh Miſs Denbeigh!" ſaid he, "your countenance confirms the truth of the report I have juſt heard from Miſs Felton. She has told me you were taken extremely ill at Mrs. Sydenham's laſt night."

"From ſome cauſe or other, probably the heat of the room, I fainted," replied Auguſta.

"I fear," ſaid he, "I was the unfortunate cauſe.—I not only awakened your ſenſibility on my own account, but revived in your memory ſo many painful ideas, that your gentle ſpirit ſunk under them. But I will diſtreſs you no longer thus. I will quit England, and baniſh myſelf from you, until I find myſelf more worthy of being your friend. In the mean time you muſt give me leave to introduce you to my ſiſter, Lady Mortimer. She will be proud of that title, and is already prepared to love, and admire you."

"The reſolution you have taken, my Lord," replied Auguſta, "is now unneceſſary. I remove from town to-morrow morning, probably to viſit it no more, and as there will be ſo little chance of our ever meeting again, I hope you

will relinquiſh the idea of exiling yourſelf from your friends. If any thing could tempt me to regret the ſuddenneſs of my departure, it would be the loſs of the pleaſure you have been ſo good as to prepare for me, in the propoſed introduction to Lady Mortimer."

"Indeed!" ſaid Lord Euſton! "do you leave town ſo very ſoon? Alas! much as I had prepared myſelf to quit you, this ſeparation ſeems a final blow to my peace. May I aſk whither are you going? and what occaſions ſo ſudden a departure?"

"Lady Merton," replied Auguſta, "thinks that my health will be reſtored by a change of air, and kindly propoſes to take me into the country with her. Her ſolicitude for me is ſo flattering, that ſhe has determined our excurſion ſhall take place without delay."

"Oh!" exclaimed Lord Euſton, "may health, and every other happineſs attend you: but a foreign climate muſt be my refuge. When we meet again, I hope to bring you acquainted with my ſiſter; but until that period arrives, you muſt promiſe me to look upon this ſome times, that you may not forget your unhappy friend." As he ſpoke, he preſented a beautiful watch to Auguſta.

"Indeed," replied ſhe, "I ſhall need no memento to recall the remembrance of you. You are now too high in my opinion for me ever to forget you; but the watch I cannot receive."

"Here is the one you gave me of my uncle's," ſaid he, taking it from his pocket, "and I value it beyond any thing that money can purchaſe. You will either deprive me of this treaſure, or take a bauble for which I have no uſe. One of them I poſitively leave behind me."

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"If that be my only alternative," ſaid Auguſta, "I will take that which you wiſh me, and if it will give you pleaſure, I promiſe you it ſhall be my conſtant companion."

He kiſſed her hand, and unable to expreſs more than an inarticulate farewell, haſtily left her.

When Lady Merton returned ſhe found Auguſta in tears. She kindly ſtrove to diſperſe them, and with a ſmile told her, that ſhe had eſcaped a recounter that morning, which would have involved her in much deeper diſtreſs. This was no other than a viſit from Mr. and Mrs. Sydenham, who had called ſeparately at Lady Merton's, and been denied in conſequence of Auguſta's orders.

The ladies took leave of each other, at an early hour, having agreed to be in the carriage by ſix o'clock; and Auguſta, who had received ſuch a ſmall portion of pleaſure from her viſit to London, joyfully prepared to quit it.

CHAP. XIX.

THE ſituation of Merton Lodge, where the travellers arrived in ſafety, was beautiful and romantic. The park and pleaſure grounds were on a large ſcale, and exhibited a degree of grandeur, to which however, the houſe did but ill accord: It had indeed been no more than a hunting ſeat, before that part of the eſtate on which Sefton Caſtle was placed, deſcended to the younger

branch of the family. The late Lord Merton, not having money enough to build a new houſe, had enlarged the old one, ſo as to make it thoroughly convenient. As it was his conſtant reſidence, it ſuffered nothing from neglect; and every beauty which nature had beſtowed, was rendered more beautiful by the aſſiſtance of art.

Although Lady Merton had been abſent for ſo ſhort a time, her neighbours appeared to feel a ſincere joy at her return. Theſe were but few; and Auguſta remarked with ſurpriſe the difference of manners which was perceptible between them, and the circles ſhe had ſeen in London. There every body talked much, laughed more, were perfectly at their eaſe, and too well bred to imagine they could be troubleſome. Here each ſeemed to labour under an aukward reſtraint, which not even the good humoured affability of Lady Merton could remove; and in the fear of offending, they appeared to have forgot that any efforts were neceſſary to contribute to the pleaſures of converſation. She conſoled herſelf for ſo unwelcome a change, by reflecting that in more poliſhed circles, all was ſuperficial. Here, thought ſhe, I ſhall find ſincerity, humility, and rectitude of heart.

Among the viſitants at Merton Lodge, one family ſo particularly ſtruck Auguſta, that ſhe could not forbear making ſome inquiries about them.

"The daughter," ſaid Lady Merton, "is ſenſible and pleaſing; and indeed it is her ſociety alone which induces me to aſſociate with the others. Mr. Simpſon made a fortune abroad, and you may perceive by his dialect, that he is totally uneducated, and that his extraction muſt have been mean: But notwithſtanding this, the

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ſon has ſo many pretenſions, and talks ſo inceſſantly about his family, that he is the moſt inſufferable coxcomb I ever met with. His father is the only perſon who drives a carriage in the town where they reſide, and I really believe it is this ſilly circumſtance, which gives him ſo much conſequence. He has certainly talents, but they are of a ſatiric ſort, which I equally dread and deſpiſe."

"I am very ſorry for his ſiſter," replied Auguſta, "who ſeems indeed to be amiable, and the reverſe of what your ladyſhip has deſcribed."

"She certainly is ſo," ſaid Lady Merton; "and amongſt all my neareſt neighbours, I think ſhe is the only one you will like for a companion: I will therefore ſoon ſend them an invitation to dine with us."

The journey, change of air, and the ſweet ſcenery of Merton Lodge, had altogether ſo far tranquilliſed Auguſta's ſpirits, that her looks already beſpoke an amendment in her health. Lady Merton, whoſe friendſhip for her increaſed every day, was moſt happy to obſerve this. She accompanied her in her morning rambles through the woods, whoſe ſheltering ſhades had protected the early bloſſoms of May, which now in return enlivened their tender foliage with the brighteſt tints. In the evening they read together, or Auguſta played on the harpſichord whilſt Lady Merton worked.

On the day appointed, Mr. and Miſs Simpſon arrived at Merton Lodge; for young Mr. Simpſon was detained elſewhere. After the firſt ceremonies were over, Mr. Simpſon ſaid, "Pray, ma'am, does your ladyſhip ever remember ſuch mature warm weather at this time of the year?"

"The ſeaſon is uncommonly fine indeed," replied ſhe.

"We ſaw a number of liſteneſſes in the hedges," ſaid he, "which Harriot ſays is a very extraordinary thing."

"The lichnis," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, bluſhing exceſſively, "is not uſed to bloſſom ſo early.

"You ladies," cried Lady Merton, "are botaniſts, and will, I am ſure, have mutual pleaſure in being better known to each other."

"If that young lady is as great a natural as my daughter," ſaid Mr. Simpſon, "they will be nice companions, and I hope we ſhall ſee her often."

Auguſta bowed her acknowledgments, and pitied the confuſion into which this ſpeech had thrown Miſs Simpſon.

"Your ladyſhip ſtaid but a ſhort time in London," ſaid Mr. Simpſon. "I ſuppoſe it is overrun with French Arcoſtats; and, to be ſure, when the king is expoſed, he will come here alſo; for where elſe can he be ſo ſafe? All Europe ſeems going to war, except England and America: But pray, ma'am, do you give their titles to theſe depraved French nobles?"

"It is no wonder," replied Lady Merton, "that thoſe unhappy people fly from their own country, which is now become the ſcene of the moſt horrible maſſacres; and ſurely every kingdom ought to afford an aſylum to the miſerable. At the commencement of the revolution, numbers of the nobility, were patriotic enough to ſacrifice their titles at the newly erected ſhrine of liberty; and thoſe who thus relinquiſhed, cannot now conſiſtently receive them."

"If they were to ſuffer no greater loſs then the derivation of their titles," ſaid Mr. Simpſon,

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"it would be of little conſequence. Property is the only thing that ought to make the diſtinction between people; and thoſe who have the ſubſtance, need not quarrel about the ſhadow.

"It is dreadful and affecting," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "to obſerve the ſavage outrages which are committed among a people, who call themſelves the moſt refined nation on earth. There cannot perhaps be a more ſevere ſatire on the frivolity, and indeciſive character of the Pariſians, than what is exhibited in their public prints; for the very ſame paper which announces to us the murder of thouſands of their fellow citizens, conveys alſo an account of the neweſt faſhions."

"Your remark is perfectly juſt," replied Lady Merton.

"And I rather think we ſhall have occaſion to obſerve, that ſubordination has an influence on the manners, as the reſtrictions of the law, have upon the morals of ſociety. We can hardly be grateful enough for our own invaluable form of government, which, though perhaps faulty in ſome reſpects, is on the whole unequalled."

"Aye, aye," cried Mr. Simpſon. "Our poſſeſſions are ſecured to us, and that is enough; and I wiſh every perſon who writes a label upon government was to be impriſoned for life."

"That," ſaid Lady Merton, ſmiling, "would be to erect a baſtile in England, which God forbid."

Auguſta had ſilently liſtened to the diſcuſſion of thoſe two firſt Engliſh topics, the weather and politics, when dinner was announced. She was greatly pleaſed with the manners of Miſs Simpſon, and no leſs diverted with the ſingularities of her father; who ſeemed to admire every ſentence

which fell from his daughter's lips, and who indeed, from his unfortunate miſapplication of many of them, proved how very neceſſary a little further attention was.

As they were taking their tea, young Simpſon entered the room. He began a long explanation to Lady Merton, of the nature of the engagement which had kept him from dinner.

"Strangeways," continued he, "would not take any denial to my ſtaying all night, until I told him, that my family dined, and ſpent the evening with your ladyſhip, and that I ſhould get into terrible diſgrace if I did not make my appearance."

"Was Lord Strangeways of the party?" aſked Mr. Simpſon.

"Yes, Sir," anſwered his ſon. "He, and I, and Gower, dined at Laſſington's. By the way, Harriot, I have exchanged your bay mare, for a very beautiful galloway."

"I hope it is as gentle a creature," ſaid ſhe, "as the other, for you know I am a great coward."

"Nonſenſe," replied he. "I will have you to ride as other people do. He has ſpirit, but Lady Sarah has mounted him. Pray, Miſs Denbeigh, will you be of our riding party to-morrow morning?"

"I have never yet been on horſeback," ſaid Auguſta; "and I think I ſhall not dare to make the attempt.

"I am ſurpriſed at that," replied young Mr. Simpſon; "as every body rides; and you," added he, laughing very loud, "would make a good equeſtrian figure."

"If you hold that out as a motive to Miſs Denbeigh," cried Lady Merton, "I ſuppoſe you ſuſpect

pect that it has a general influence on all young ladies."

"I ſuſpect," anſwered he, with another very loud laugh, "that it is the general ſtudy of the ſex, how they may appear to the beſt advantage."

"We will apply the obſervation to the mind," ſaid Miſs Simpſon; "and then I think we ſhall regret that the men are not equally ſtudious how to pleaſe."

"You are right, my Harriot," cried Mr. Simpſon. "But the young men of the preſent times care only about pleaſing themſelves."

"And what did the young men of former times do?" ſaid young Mr. Simpſon, in an ironical tone. "I am ſure, if one may judge from inference, if they ſtudied ever ſo little how to pleaſe themſelves, they were ſtill leſs able to give pleaſure to others."

Old Mr. Simpſon ſeemed diſinclined to make any reply to this ſarcaſm of his ſon; and Lady Merton, too much diſguſted to continue the converſation, immediately called for cards. Auguſta, for the firſt time, ſat down to commerce, and for the firſt time thought cards an agreeable interruption. Mr. William Simpſon inſiſted upon being her inſtructer, and ſhared with her in the profits of the game. He ſtrove to impreſs her with an idea of his wit, but ſhe heard him without attention, and her ſpirits were wearied with his inceſſant laughter: And when at laſt, a period was put to the viſit, ſhe felt herſelf happy and relieved.

CHAP. XX.

ON the following morning, Auguſta ſtrolled out by herſelf, Lady Merton having letters to write; and ſhe ſoon perceived at ſome little diſtance, Mr. William Simpſon and his ſiſter on horſeback. He was upon the gallop, and ſeemed encouraging Miſs Simpſon to follow him. Her horſe, which appeared fiery and untractable, at length ſprung forward, and paſſing Mr. Simpſon, ran acroſs the park, with incredible ſwiftneſs. He checked his ſpeed, and Auguſta looked forward to the event with trembling ſolicitude. Miſs Simpſon kept her ſeat for a conſiderable time, but at laſt fell. Mr. Simpſon now galloped to her as faſt as he could, and Auguſta almoſt flew acroſs the lawn. She arrived ſoon after he had raiſed his ſiſter from the ground, and found, to her great joy, that ſhe had received no conſiderable injury. Her brother, after ſome harſh expreſſions, on her want of courage, which he ſaid had occaſioned the accident, remounted his own horſe, and rode after the other.

Although Miſs Simpſon was not hurt, ſhe was extremely ill with her fright. Auguſta ſupported her, and they directed their ſteps towards the houſe; but long before they reached it, young Mr. Simpſon overtook them, leading his ſiſter's horſe.

"I promiſe you," ſaid he, "the creature is quite tamed, ſo you had beſt mount again directly."

"I hope," replied Auguſta, "Miſs Simpſon will

will not attempt to do that. Lady Merton, I am ſure, will ſend her home in the carriage."

"Oh no," anſwered he, "not for the world. Now is the time to conquer her fears, and I will have her ride home on horſeback."

Auguſta expoſtulated, but in vain; and Miſs Simpſon was obliged to yield to her peremptory brother; who however condeſcended to promiſe, that ſhe ſhould walk her horſe the whole of the way home.

When Auguſta related this circumſtance to Lady Merton, ſhe regretted exceſſively that ſhe had not been preſent, declaring ſhe would not have permitted ſo cruel a reſtraint to have been put upon Miſs Simpſon.

"The dictatorial manners of that young man," added ſhe, "is intolerable; but we will go this evening and inquire after the poor girl. I think I can perſuade the father not to let her mount this run-away horſe again."

They accordingly drove to Mr. Simpſon's, who received them with very great joy, but told them that his daughter was ſo ill in conſequence of her fright, that ſhe kept her room. Auguſta received his permiſſion to viſit her there, and Lady Merton took the opportunity of her abſence, to intreat that he would put a negative upon Miſs Simpſon's riding the ſame horſe again.

"I am very much obliged to your ladyſhip," anſwered he, "but I have exhibited her already, and my ſon is much diſpleaſed with me. To be ſure he only wiſhes to have her do what is faſhionable; but I cannot conſent to let her run any ſuch dangers, though my expectorations have very little effect upon him."

Here young Mr. Simpſon entered the room, and ſhortly after Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon, who found

found herſelf ſo much better, that ſhe inſiſted upon joining the party below ſtairs. Mr. William Simpſon was gloomy, and abrupt in his anſwers to his father, who tried to coax him into good humour. Soon after tea the two ladies departed, having firſt obtained a promiſe from Miſs Simpſon, that ſhe would ſpend the next day at Merton Lodge.

Mutual ſentiments of eſteem ſoon united Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon in the ſtricteſt bonds of friendſhip, and ſcarcely a day paſt without their ſeeing each other. A companion of her own age and ſex, to whom ſhe could relate each ſentiment of her ingenuous mind, was ſo truly delightful to Auguſta, that ſhe congratulated herſelf on having obtained the poſſeſſion of the firſt earthly felicity, a ſincere friend. Young Mr. Simpſon was frequently with them. Gratified by being on ſuch an intimate footing in Lady Merton's family, he ſoftened, as much as he could, the aſperity of his manners, and exerted his talents to render himſelf agreeable: Whilſt they, from being in the habit of ſeeing him often, became leſs ſenſible of, or perhaps more indulgent to his foibles.

The diſtinguiſhing attentions which Lady Merton paid to Auguſta, ſecured to her the reſpect of others. Mr. William Simpſon had remarked this; and indeed his behaviour had been regulated by it; for there ſeemed to hang a ſort of myſtery over the connexions of Auguſta, which with all his penetration he could not diſcover. He had frequently beſought his ſiſter to learn from Auguſta to whom ſhe belonged; but her delicacy and good ſenſe withheld her from the enquiry. The captivating graces of Auguſta's mind and perſon

perſon had made an impreſſion on his heart, which he however kept in proper ſubordination, until he had acquired a thorough knowledge of her real circumſtances. Had ſhe been the daughter, inſtead of the friend of Lady Merton, he would have been diſtractedly in love with her: But his affection hung in equilibrium, until he heard whether her family and fortune merited ſuch a captive.

Lady Merton entered Auguſta's apartment one morning with a letter in her hand.

"Miſs Merton," ſaid ſhe, "has employed her woman to write to me. She will be here to-morrow. It ſeems ſhe is ſo dreadfully afflicted with nervous head-achs, that ſhe is incapable of writing herſelf, and her phyſician has ordered her into the country. I do not wonder that ſuch irregular hours as ſhe keeps, have injured her health. However, as I flatter myſelf it will only be a temporary affliction, I cheriſh the hope, that it may be a ſalutary one, by proving to her the folly of ſuch a mode of life as ſhe leads."

Auguſta concurred in the wiſh, and aſſiſted Lady Merton in making ſuch arrangements as they thought would be agreeable to their new gueſt.

She arrived the following day, to a late dinner. Her extreme langour ſufficiently evinced how unwell ſhe really was; and Auguſta, forgetting whatever had formerly given her cauſe for diſpleaſure, with compaſſionate kindneſs devoted her whole time to her.

This, however, ſhe ſeemed to receive more as her due, than the ſpontaneous offering of attentive politeneſs. As Lady Merton knew her extreme averſion to retired life, and that ſome ſort of amuſements muſt be obtained, ſhe adopted

the

only alternative ſhe had, which was that of forming little parties from among her neighbours. In almoſt any other ſituation, Miſs Merton would have looked upon theſe with ineffable contempt; but as their ſociety offered the only entertainment, which ſhe conceived was to be met with at Merton Lodge, ſhe condeſcended to pay them a diſtant degree of civility. The eaſy familiarity of young Mr. Simpſon, however, offended her pride; and to him ſhe generally aſſumed a good deal of hauteur, which viſibly mortified him. He determined to retaliate this neglect; and therefore redoubled his aſſiduities to Auguſta; well knowing that the only way to pique a vain woman, is to ſhew her that you give a preference to the charms of her rival. Auguſta, to whom his attentions were really diſagreeable, readily conjectured why they were paid; and as they involved her in the intended puniſhment, would gladly have diſpenſed with them.

CHAP. XXI.

MISS MERTON in a ſhort time recovered her health, and began to talk of taking her departure for Sefton Caſtle, when Lady Merton received letters from her ſon, announcing his arrival in England, and informing her that his impatience to ſee her was ſo great, that he ſhould ſet out the following morning for Merton Lodge. The boſom of this affectionate parent was extremely agitated at this news, which bade her expect

pect to ſee her ſon momentally. Her ſuſpenſe was not of long duration, for he arrived within an hour after his letter. Auguſta was a witneſs to their firſt interview, which evinced to her how dear they were to each other. Lady Merton was not however ſufficiently collected for ſome time, to introduce her ſon to Auguſta; but when ſhe became ſenſible of her omiſſion, ſhe took the hand of Auguſta, and ſaid, "Let me, my dear-eſt Merton, preſent you to the amiable and beloved friend of your mother, whoſe virtues merit your higheſt reſpect; and you, my ſweet Auguſta, to that ſon who will, I truſt, feel for you the affection of a brother."

Lord Merton who had not before even obſerved Auguſta, reſpectfully kiſſed her hand, and gazing at her for a moment, anſwered, "That he ſhould indeed be proud of ſo charming a ſiſter."

Lady Merton now informed her ſon of Miſs Merton's being a viſiter in the houſe; and hinted, that ſhe thought it would be right for him to ſend and entreat permiſſion to wait upon her, in her dreſſing room

"Oh!" cried he, gaily, "I will be my own meſſenger," and immediately ran up ſtairs.

Auguſta ſhared largely in the happineſs of Lady Merton, who was not only overjoyed at ſeeing her ſon reſtored in ſafety to his native country, but had alſo the ſupreme ſatisfaction of obſerving an improvement in his perſon and manners, which is not often attained by thoſe who viſit foreign kingdoms. Lord Merton was in fact, what the world univerſally calls an exceeding handſome young man. He had a great degree of vivacity, and an equal portion of good humour. There was a gracefulneſs in his manner which was particularly

ticularly ſtriking, and his underſtanding and heart were worthy of the culture they had received from his mother.

He returned to them in about half an hour, but ſeemed to have loſt much of his former gaiety. Lady Merton told him it was near their dinner hour, and they all ſeparated to dreſs.

When Auguſta again entered the drawing room, the abſurdity of Miſs Merton, could not eſcape her notice. Her deportment was ſo ſtately, that ſhe ſeemed to exact homage from all who approached her, and eſpecially Lord Merton, who was obliged to repreſs a thouſand little lively ſallies, leaſt her dignity ſhould be offended. So unfortunate is the influence of pride and formality, that the individual who poſſeſſes thoſe unenviable qualities, may at any time diſturb the harmony of the happieſt circles: And ſo it fared with this little ſociety, for the reſtraint impoſed by Miſs Merton, threw a gloom over their repaſt, and ſoon after dinner, Lord Merton was left to his own reflections. Theſe were by no means pleaſant. The reception he had met with from Miſs Merton, and the viſible change in her manners, gave him but too much reaſon to ſuppoſe that ſome other attachment had alienated her affections from him, and that his preſence had therefore given her no ſenſations but thoſe of regret. Accuſtomed, as he always had been, to look forward to her as his deſtined wife, he had never before examined whether ſhe had the entire poſſeſſion of his heart, or not; and the eaſe with which he found he could now relinquiſh his hopes, gave him the firſt doubts he had ever entertained of the fervency of his affection. If a predilection in favour of another, rendered her thus diſdainful, he determined to releaſe her

from

from thoſe engagements ſhe had formed with him; and if from a change of diſpoſition and manners, ſhe has become ſo thoroughly repulſive and diſagreeable, he thought he had equally a right to be releaſed. Her immenſe poſſeſſions, formerly the inheritance of his anceſtors, were thought of but for a moment; for he recoiled from the idea of receiving obligations from an imperious tyrant.

His father's intentions, his mother's wiſhes, had their full weight, and ſoftened his heart into hopes that he might have miſtaken the character of Miſs Merton: That her reſerve might be found to originate from ſome other cauſes, perhaps her doubts of him: and if ſo, he reſolved to convince her, that he merited the choice her friends had made for her, and was ready to offer to her his vows at the altar.

In this diſpoſition of mind, he joined the ladies in the drawing room. He found Mr. William Simpſon there, who had aſſumed to himſelf the privilege of dropping in, whenever he felt ſo diſpoſed. The gentlemen were introduced to each other, for they were entire ſtrangers; Mr. Simpſon's father having ſettled in that neighbourhood during the abſence of Lord Merton.

Mr. William Simpſon was ſo much ſtruck with the fine figure and addreſs of Lord Merton, that he almoſt felt his own inſignificance. Recollecting, however, that ſuch an acquaintance would be deſirable, he reſolved to uſe his utmoſt endeavours to cultivate it; and therefore re-aſſuming a little of his ſelf complacency, he entered into converſation with him, on the ſubject of his travels. Lady Merton and Auguſta joined in it, but Miſs Merton was playing with a little Italian greyhound, which generally ſat by her on the

ſofa.

ſofa. The information which Lord Merton gave them was ſo intereſting, that they ſeemed to have forgot ſhe was preſent, until his Lordſhip, wiſhing to avoid the appearance of neglect, addreſſed himſelf to her and ſaid, "You will naturally ſuppoſe that my long reſidence in Italy has made me more fond of muſic than ever; and I recollect with pleaſure your partiality for it; may I aſk the indulgence of hearing you play, without the fear that I am giving you too much trouble."

"Indeed, my Lord," replied Miſs Merton, "we have now ſo much muſic in England, that I have quite an averſion to it. Every body fancies they can play now; for which reaſon I ſuppoſe it will ſoon grow out of faſhion."

Mr. William Simpſon, who knew where the ſarcaſm was intended, replied, "Your petition, my Lord, muſt be transferred to Miſs Denbeigh, whoſe ſtyle of performance would reconcile one to muſic, even if it were out of faſhion."

This pointed ſpeech, together with the compliment paid her, embarraſſed Auguſta ſo much, that ſhe begged to decline playing; but Lord Merton, who attributed her confuſion to her timidity, would not admit of her excuſes, and ſhe at laſt took her ſeat at the harpſichord.

Young Mr. Simpſon, who neglected no opportunity of mortifying Miſs Merton, addreſſed himſelf to her whilſt Auguſta was playing, and aſked if ſhe did not think her performance divine?

"I think ſhe plays vaſtly well," anſwered ſhe with a ſmile, which was the firſt ſhe had ever honoured him with, "conſidering that the old man with whom ſhe lived in Wales is the only inſtructor ſhe ever had; but ſhe has no idea of taſte."

"The old man with whom ſhe lived in Wales," repeated Mr. William Simpſon to himſelf, and his thoughts

thoughts were immediately detached from the performance.

Lord Merton's encomiums were ſo very great, that Auguſta was again diſconcerted. He wiſhed to have detained her longer at the harpſichord, but he feared, after Miſs Merton's declaration of her averſion to muſic, that ſhe might poſſibly conſtrue it into an act of rudeneſs to herſelf.

"I think," ſaid Lady Merton, "that you are fond of dancing, Miſs Merton."

"Oh, exceſſively, madam; eſpecially where one changes partners every two dances. To have the ſame partner for the whole evening, renders it the moſt odious, tireſome thing on earth"

"It is a well contrived thing enough," ſaid Mr. William Simpſon, "and like many other modern faſhions, is well calculated to conceal defects. The ſame ſmall talk will ſuffice for each partner, and they may mutually obtain the credit of being agreeable, without taking any trouble to render themſelves ſo."

"Well," continued Lady Merton, "we will have a ball in the courſe of the enſuing week, and as you, my dear Miſs Merton, love a crowd, I hope you will not be averſe to a dance with Lord Merton's tenants. The good creatures are at this moment demonſtrating their joy at his arrival, and I muſt really ſhew them ſome civility in return for their hearty kindneſs. I will try," added ſhe with a ſmile, "to collect a change of partners for you, that you may hear a profuſion of civil ſpeeches, and Mr. William Simpſon be ſpared the trouble of exerciſing his invention for new ones."

"Methinks," ſaid Lord Merton, "this cuſtom, in many inſtances, is extremely unpleaſant. If one has an agreeable partner it is terribly mortifying

tifying to have her taken away. I always upon thoſe occaſions feel the ſpirit of chivalry in me, and long to aſſert my right to the honour which has been conferred upon me. What ſay you, Miſs Denbeigh? Can you think a change of partners deſireable, when you hear the avowed motive?"

"The very reverſe, I ſhould ſuppoſe," anſwered ſhe, "but I cannot ſpeak experimentally, having never yet danced."

"My God!" exclaimed Miſs Merton, looking at Mr. Simpſon, "have you really never learned to dance?"

"No, madam," replied Auguſta, unconſcious of the cauſe there was for ſurpriſe, and unſuſpicious of the effect ſuch a declaration would have.

A ſilence of ſome moments enſued, during which Miſs Merton and Mr. Simpſon exchanged ſome very ſignificant looks, which Lady Merton obſerving, ſaid, "You, my dear Miſs Denbeigh, excel ſo very much in every ſuperior accompliſhment, that one could hardly regret your not having attained that, but from the loſs your friends ſuſtain, to whom it could not fail of being a freſh ſource of pleaſure."

Lord Merton indicated by his countenance how much he was delighted with this remark of his mother, whilſt Auguſta bowed with gratitude to her kind friend.

Mr. Simpſon finding a ceſſation in the converſation, aroſe to take his leave, and received from Miſs Merton a more gracious farewell than he had ever before met with. He ſhook hands moſt cordially with Lord Merton, and wiſhed Auguſta a haſty good night; being perſuaded that ſhe had no high claim upon his further attentions, ſince ſhe had never learnt to dance.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

LORD MERTON's perſevering aſſiduities, inſtead of ſoftening the haughty manners of Miſs Merton, ſeemed only to give her ſtill higher ideas of her own importance. She believed herſelf totally indifferent to him, any farther than that her father had decreed he ſhould become her huſband; and as ſhe was by this means deprived of a choice, ſhe was determined to ſupport her dignity, by the ſtricteſt exertion to command reſpect. Lady Merton contemplated her vain and capricious behaviour with extreme pain; and the more ſo, as ſhe viſibly perceived the diſguſt with which Lord Merton ſeemed to ſtruggle. She frequently ſought for ſympathy in the friendly boſom of Auguſta; who, though ſhe daily received from Miſs Merton innumerable little inſults, encouraged her to hope that theſe follies neither aroſe from the heart or the underſtanding, and would therefore of courſe wear away, when ſhe was more detached from thoſe ſocieties where ſhe had imbibed them. Theſe ſuggeſtions held out a ray of comfort to Lady Merton; but it was ſoon obſcured by the increaſing melancholy which ſhe obſerved in her ſon.

The day now arrived that was to celebrate the return of Lord Merton; and as it was chiefly deſigned as a day of jubilee for the tenants, the company all dined together in the hall: And this arrangement had been previouſly ſpoken of, that none of the other gueſts might feel any offence at being unexpectedly ſo aſſociated. Indeed ſeveral

veral of them, in imitation of the condeſcenſion of Lady Merton, diſperſed themſelves round the table, ſo as to be of uſe to her, in taking care of her humble, but honeſt hearted viſitors. Miſs Merton, who had pointed to Mr. William Simpſon to take the chair next her, eat nothing, ſo much was ſhe ingroſſed in making remarks on the ſurrounding figures, to whom her ſupercilious looks were extremely diſtreſſing. The finery, as ſhe termed it, of the farmer's daughters underwent a ſtrict ſcrutiny, and her obſervations, imparted in whiſpers to Mr. William Simpſon, drew from him ſuch loud and inceſſant laughter, that Lady Merton was obliged to aſſume a degree of diſpleaſure which her benevolent features ſeldom wore, in order to check the impropriety of their behaviour. Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon, ſat on each hand of Lord Merton, at the bottom of the table, who appeared in high ſpirits, and delighted every one by the diſtinguiſhing attentions he paid them.

Lord Merton and Miſs Merton began the dance, for he had not failed in the punctilio of ſoliciting that honour, ſeveral days previous to the ball. She danced extremely well, and was proud to diſplay herſelf, even to thoſe very people, whom ſhe regarded with contempt; ſo inconſiſtent a thing is vanity. Auguſta, who ſat by, having without diſguiſe told every body who aſked her to dance, that ſhe knew not how, was infinitely amuſed by the ſight of the dancers. Her feet beat time with the muſic, and ſhe fancied that if ſhe could aſſume courage to begin, ſhe could eaſily manage the intricacies of the figure. As ſhe had hitherto ſeen no dancing but that at the opera houſe, which every body called very fine, ſhe had fancied it a difficult attainment, and

was therefore ſurpriſed by the cheerful ſcene of a country dance, in which every one appeared to her to acquit themſelves with eaſe and dexterity. She was relating to Lady Merton the impreſſion which this new ſcene had made upon her, when, the two firſt dances being finiſhed, Lord Merton approached, and ſmiling ſaid, "I come with a requeſt, which muſt not be refuſed, becauſe I know not how to reconcile myſelf to the mortification of a refuſal."

"Name it," replied Auguſta.

"It is," continued he, "that you will diſtinguiſh this day, by allowing me to have the happineſs of dancing the two next dances with you."

"After the confeſſion I have made of my ignorance," cried Auguſta, "have you really the temerity to engage in the taſk of becoming my inſtructor? What ſay you, madam, (turning to Lady Merton) ſhall I puniſh Lord Merton for his raſhneſs in attempting ſo arduous an undertaking?"

"The acceptance of his propoſal will oblige me as well as him," replied Lady Merton; "and it will moreover convince others, of what I know to be true, that you are above the ſilly affectation of refuſing to ſhare in the amuſement, becauſe you are conſcious that you do not excel in it."

Auguſta, after ſtipulating that ſhe ſhould go to the bottom of the ſet, ſuffered Lord Merton to lead her thither. The little ſhe had to do, in the going up the room, together with the commendations of Lord Merton, ſomewhat reaſſured her; but when ſhe met Miſs Merton, her affected ſurpriſe ſo entirely diſconcerted her, that ſhe forgot her part in the dance, and ſtood motionleſs; which produced a loud laugh from Miſs Merton

Merton and her partner, who was young Mr. Simpſon.

"I had better ſit down," ſaid Auguſta, "indeed I had; I ſhall only expoſe you to laughter, as well as myſelf, Lord Merton."

"My dear Miſs Denbeigh," exclaimed he, "you are the only perſon who does not perceive that all this ariſes from envy of your ſuperior attractions. Truſt to my judgement I entreat you; for I am ſo deeply intereſted in whatever relates to you, that worlds would not bribe me to draw you into merited ridicule."

Auguſta bowed, but without giving implicit confidence to an opinion which ſhe ſaw was but too partial. Fortunately, however, Miſs Simpſon now came up, and ſaid, "Oh, Miſs Denbeigh, you are very ſly, if what my brother told me is true, that you avow you have never learnt to dance. You perform ſo well, that you muſt only have ſaid ſo to ſurpriſe us."

"My dear friend," replied Auguſta, "it is but too true, that this is the firſt time I ever made an attempt of the kind; and but for this praiſe of yours, I think I ſhould have given it up immediately."

"I am ſorry then," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "that you declared as much, for believe me no one could have found it out."

Lord Merton's anxiety now redoubled; and when Auguſta went down the dance, his eye and hand, ſo well directed her, that ſhe made no miſtake in the figure, and ſhe wanted no better direction than her own ear for the time. Arrived at the bottom of the dance, ſhe received the commendations of Lady Merton. Her being entirely taken up with the part ſhe had to perform, ſpared her from one mortification prepared for

for her; for Miſs Merton had quitted the dance, and taken a ſeat, from whence ſhe could beſt divert herſelf with making obſervations. This however was not loſt upon Lord Merton, who, when they were ſeated, vehemently reprobated the incivilities his fair partner had met with; but attributed it, as before, to envy.

"Indeed," ſaid Auguſta, "I did not expect to find more indulgence, eſpecially as I had candidly confeſſed what ſhould have pleaded an excuſe for my awkwardneſs."

"Oh," replied he, "call not any thing you do by that name: Your every action, and your every look, alike claim the admiration of all who ſee you."

Here Miſs Merton came up, attended by Mr. William Simpſon, who gave a gentle motion to an immenſe large fan, which he held in his hand, that the dreſs of Miſs Merton's hair might not be diſarranged.

"I have read," ſaid ſhe, "the ſtory of Iphigenia, and Miſs Denbeigh's *ſudden* improvement in the art of dancing, is, I ſuppoſe to be attributed to the ſame cauſe."

"Undoubtedly," cried Mr. William Simpſon. "Love is a wonder-working god."

The ſurpriſe of Auguſta, at this rude attack and inſinuation, kept her ſilent; but not ſo Lord Merton: He gave a look of reſentment firſt at Miſs Merton, and then turning to Mr. William Simpſon, he ſaid, "If that lady thinks herſelf privileged to indulge herſelf in ill-natured ſallies, *you*, at leaſt, Sir, ſhould remember, that impertinent freedoms call for chaſtiſement."

"I had no intention,—indeed I did not mean, my Lord," ſtammered out Mr. Simpſon, to offend either you or Miſs Denbeigh; and I am

ſorry if Miſs Merton's livelineſs hurried me into an indiſcretion."

"Oh," ſaid Miſs Merton, colouring violently, "Lord Merton would threaten me with chaſtiſement if he durſt; but thank heaven I have not yet given him a right, neither will I ever put it in his power."

She then walked very majeſtically to the top of the room, and called another dance.

"How unhappy I am," ſaid Auguſta, addreſſing herſelf to Lord Merton, "to have occaſioned this diſagreeable altercation between you and Miſs Merton. Leave me, I beſeech you, and try to appeaſe her."

"No, never," replied Lord Merton; "I will be the ſlave of her inſolence no longer. Such conduct releaſes me from my bonds, and from this moment I am free."

"For God's ſake," exclaimed Auguſta, "retract this haſty deciſion! Recollect how much your poor mother's peace of mind is involved in it."

"Alas!" ſaid Lord Merton, "is it not better ſhe ſhould ſacrifice her ambition, than I my happineſs?"

"I truſt," replied Auguſta, "that they will not be found incompatible with each other. Miſs Merton is young, and circumſtances have conſpired to render her the object of much adulation: But the time muſt ſoon arrive when ſhe will perceive of how little value that is, compared to the homage of ſo worthy a heart as yours; and the little follies which obſcure her good qualities will then vaniſh."

"O Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lord Merton, "how amiable, how generous is your mind! You not only forgive, but become the advocate of a woman

man who treats you with unprovoked contempt, and momentarily inſults you. Believe me," added he with a ſigh, "I have long contemplated the ſtrong oppoſition of your characters, and I have adored the one, as much as I have diſliked the other."

The fervour with which Lord Merton uttered the latter part of this ſpeech, diſconcerted Auguſta; and as ſhe made no reply, he thus continued:

"You know the nature of my engagement with Miſs Merton; tell me candidly, is it not more diſhonourable to marry a woman whom I diſlike, in order to poſſeſs her fortune, than to break through an agreement made without my conſent? It is apparent too that ſhe has an averſion to me; and to this I may add another reaſon, which is, that my heart is inviolably attached elſewhere."

"If you make me the caſuiſt," replied ſhe, "I muſt ſtate the caſe in a different way to what you have; for you have omitted one moſt material trait; which is, that ſince you have been able to judge of your father's diſpoſal of you, you have ratified it with your full conſent, and been the profeſſed admirer of Miſs Merton: A deſertion of her muſt therefore be *cruel*, to ſay no worſe of it; and if, after ſo many years ſpent in gaining her affections, it ſhould be found that you had lightly transferred yours to another, the whole world would certainly agree in calling it *unjuſt*. I think you are the neareſt relation Miſs Merton now has living. Let me aſk you if any other man had treated her in a ſimilar way, whether ſhe would not have looked up to, and found protection from you?"

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Merton, "in what an unfavourable light do you place my conduct! You, on whoſe good opinion my chief hopes of happineſs now reſt. Ah, Miſs Denbeigh! grant me your pity, or I am the moſt wretched of men."

"My pity," replied ſhe, "I ſincerely give you, but my advice would do you more ſervice, and that you will not take."

Here Lady Merton and old Mr. Simpſon approached them, and Lord Merton had therefore only time to ſay, "Miſs Denbeigh, you will not underſtand me." But he ſpoke it with ſo dejected an air, that Lady Merton ſeemed to obſerve him with ſurpriſe. She rallied them on being idle; and a gentleman who juſt then joined them, and who had before aſked Auguſta to dance, again ſolicited her to become his partner; but the ridicule ſhe had experienced from Miſs Merton diſcouraged her from making another attempt, and ſhe alledged what was really true, that her fears had agitated her ſo much, that ſhe found herſelf unable to dance again.

"Perhaps the room is too hot for the young lady," cried old Mr. Simpſon. "For my part I wonder they have no contrivances in ball rooms to rectify the air."

"Ventilators are very good things," ſaid Lady Merton.

"Aye, aye," replied Mr. Simpſon, "undulators are what I meant."

Auguſta took this opportunity to eſcape unobſerved from the company; and when ſhe found herſelf alone, ſhe ſuffered her tears to flow unreſtrained. Her ſpirit was wounded by the unkindneſs of Miſs Merton, but more deeply ſo by the diſcovery ſhe had made of Lord Merton's ſentiments

timents reſpecting herſelf, which ſhe ſaw would inevitably produce conſequences which ſhe dreaded to look forward to. She debated in her own mind, on the line of conduct it would be moſt proper for her to adopt, and at length determined, that if he again led to the ſubject, ſhe would no longer affect not to underſtand him, but to give ſuch decided diſcouragement to his pretenſions, as ſhe hoped would effectually deſtroy them. She reſolved not to communicate the affair to Lady Merton, as ſhe had at firſt propoſed, becauſe ſhe knew the pain it would give her, and ſhe hoped to make Lord Merton return to a ſenſe of what he owed to her, himſelf, the world, and his engagements.

She had remained for ſome time abſorbed by theſe ſort of reflections, when Lady Merton entered her room.

"You are in tears," ſaid ſhe, "and I know the cauſe."

She then told her, that ſhe had aſked Miſs Merton, how long it would be agreeable to her to dance, before ſupper, and received for reply, "That the ſooner the party broke up, the better, ſince the maſter of the ceremonies had ceaſed to treat his viſitors with any civility." That having applied to Lord Merton for an explanation of all this, he had related to her the affronting behaviour of Miſs Merton. "This ſilly girl," continued ſhe, "diſappoints all my ſchemes of happineſs; but let us return to the company, and think of her as little as we can."

At twelve o'clock Lady Merton and her party withdrew, to partake of a ſupper which was prepared for them; and at the ſame time ſideboard refreſhments were ſpread for the remainder of

the company, who were left at liberty to continue dancing as long as they pleaſed.

The cheerfulneſs of the party had however entirely forſaken them. Lord Merton ſeemed to ſtruggle againſt a melancholy which he could not conquer: Lady Merton was abſent, and their viſitors, who perceived that ſomething was wrong, ſilent. Miſs Merton was the only perſon who appeared to have preſerved her good ſpirits. She was more than uſually talkative; laughed at her own bon mots, but addreſſed none of her converſation either to Lady Merton, Auguſta, or Lord Merton. Every one ſeemed willing to ſeparate; the carriages were therefore ordered, and a general ſeparation ſoon took place.

CHAP. XXIII.

AUGUSTA entered the breakfaſt parlour late, for her night had been ſleepleſs. She found Lady Merton in converſation with Miſs Merton's maid, who had brought an apology from her lady, for not attending her. Lord Merton ſoon joined them; and when their mutual inquiries had ceaſed, each ſeemed diſpoſed to remain ſilent. When their repaſt was finiſhed, Auguſta quitted the room, as ſhe thought that both Lord Merton and his mother might poſſibly wiſh for ſome private converſation. She had ſcarcely ſeated herſelf in her dreſſing room, before ſhe ſaw from the window that Miſs Simpſon was riding up the avenue;

nue; and ſhe then recollected that ſhe had by appointment promiſed to aſſiſt her in the finiſhing of a landſcape. Though never leſs diſpoſed for the employment than at preſent, ſhe had ſufficient command over herſelf, to meet Miſs Simpſon upon the ſtairs with cheerfulneſs, and the drawing apparatus was ſoon placed before them. When they had nearly compleated the piece, Miſs Simpſon ſaid with a ſmile, "I am almoſt tempted, before I take my departure to offer my congratulations to Miſs Denbeigh."

"On what occaſion, pray?" aſked Auguſta.

"Your conqueſt of Lord Merton."

"Of Lord Merton!" exclaimed Auguſta, turning pale; "from whence ariſes ſo ill-founded a conjecture?"

"Nay," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "if it is not true, and I have given you either pain or diſpleaſure, I ſhall be very unhappy. My brother is my only informer, and to divert you from the chagrin you appear to ſuffer, I will tell you the ſequel of his communications, which is, that he and Miſs Merton have alſo a penchant for each other."

"I know not," replied Auguſta, "which to laugh at moſt; your brother's vanity, or his pretended diſcovery: But pray tell me on what he founds his hopes of Miſs Merton's favour."

"The apparent embarraſſment of yourſelf, Lord Merton, and Lady Merton," anſwered Miſs Simpſon, "engroſſed our converſation on our way home laſt night; and William, after many hints which my father did not comprehend, at length plainly ſaid, that Miſs Mer-

ton had told him, that Lord Merton was in love with you, and that ſhe rejoiced at it, for that ſhe deſpiſed him, and would inſtantly break off her engagement with him. He then ſaid ſhe was a fine girl, had a fine fortune, and had given him ſuch encouragement, that he did not doubt but that ſhe would ſoon become his wife. He alſo related the words that had paſſed on your account, and called Lord Merton your champion, for he ſaid he had narrowly eſcaped a duel with him."

"My dear Miſs Simpſon," ſaid Auguſta, "I am greatly indebted to you for giving me this information, as it enables me to undeceive you in that part of the ſtory which relates to myſelf, and to aſſure you, that I believe the reſt of it to be equally exaggerated, or miſrepreſented. There is no attachment between me and Lord Merton; neither did the few words, which his compaſſion, and not his partiality, induced him to ſay in my defence, amount to a quarrel, or ſeem to threaten a duel. Miſs Merton is the affianced wife of Lord Merton; and you will forgive me for ſaying, that it is very improbable ſhe ſhould wiſh to break through her engagements with him, to form others with Mr. William Simpſon."

"Indeed," replied Miſs Simpſon, "I gave him little credit for it; but my poor father was quite elated at the proſpect of ſuch an union: And you muſt now forgive me in your turn, (continued ſhe,) if I own that I heartily wiſh the whole of this imaginary buſineſs, was to be realized. Lord Merton is worthy to be rewarded with ſuch a woman as yourſelf, and Miſs Merton deſerves to be puniſhed, by marrying

rying a man ſo much her own counterpart, as is my brother."

As ſhe ſpoke this with a laugh, Auguſta gave her no ſerious reply, and they ſoon afterwards bade each other good morning.

Juſt after Miſs Simpſon was gone, Auguſta received a meſſage from Lady Merton, to ſay ſhe wiſhed to ſee her in the breakfaſt parlour.

She found Lady Merton, and perceived marks of great agitation in her countenance.

"My dear Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lady Merton on her entrance, "I know not how to introduce to you, the occaſion of my aſking the favour of your company. The feelings of a mother, and my reliance on your friendſhip——"

"Tell me, madam," cried Auguſta, interrupting her, yet trembling as ſhe ſpoke, "tell me how I can be ſo fortunate as to prove myſelf deſerving of your kindneſs?"

"Lord Merton has been avowing to me the ſentiments of admiration, which he feels for you, and conſequently the invincible objections he had to the performance of his engagements with Miſs Merton.

"You will not wonder, my dear Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lady Merton, "that I have been greatly ſhocked at a declaration which annihilates at once, the ſchemes ſo many years laid for the aggrandiſement of my family; which expoſes my ſon to the cenſure of diſhonourable conduct, and the relation of my lamented huſband to the imputations which ſuch neglect will not fail to throw upon her. Had not his faith been pledged before he became acquainted with you, I ſhould have applauded a choice, which, though it did not increaſe his fortune,

would have enſured his happineſs. The pride of my heart would have been gratified in calling you daughter, and I ſhould have gloried in my ſon, for preferring a humble mediocrity with ſuch a woman, to the moſt ſplendid acquiſitions."

Auguſta bowed, without daring to lift up her eyes, which were indeed ſuffuſed with tears.

Lady Merton continued thus: "Circumſtanced however as Lord Merton is, my approbation can never be given to a preference which would now fix an indelible ſtain upon his character; and if I am not miſtaken in that of Miſs Denbeigh, ſhe will never conſent to receive thoſe vows which have been ſo cruelly perjured to another. On this confidence in the rectitude of her principles, my only hope of comfort now reſts; ſince, if Lord Merton is aſſured of her rejection of him, he will ſurely give up this raſh deſertion of Miſs Merton. You are candour itſelf, my dear; and as no delay could be made in an affair of ſuch importance to us all, I was determined, notwithſtanding the remonſtrances of my ſon, to hear your ſentiments. Speak them freely; and though I may be miſtaken in my concluſions, diſavow not the language of your heart."

"Be aſſured, madam," replied Auguſta, "that if you could yourſelf read it, you would find it to correſpond exactly with my expreſſions; and if Lord Merton had ever been explicit to me on the ſubject, he would not now have been a ſtranger to my ſentiments. I do declare then, (continued ſhe, in a firm voice) that the partiality Lord Merton honours me with, could have obtained from me, no other return than my grateful acknowledgements, even if he had been under no engagements to Miſs Merton: He will therefore

fore judge how impoſſible it is that my reſolutions can ever undergo a change, when his offers to me involve him in an act of injuſtice, which I view in ſo heinous a light, that not all his good qualities could ever re-inſtate him in my opinion."

Lord Merton now entered, and heard the latter part of her ſpeech.

"O Miſs Denbeigh!" cried Lord Merton, "do you then indeed concur with my mother in thinking that the diſpoſition—the behaviour of Miſs Merton affords no excuſe for my breaking off with her? Alas! to what wretchedneſs would you both conſign me."

"And can you, my Lord," anſwered Auguſta, "think yourſelf juſtified in condemning her behaviour, when your own is ſo much more reprehenſible?"

"With the quick penetration of inſulted affection, ſhe has diſcovered the emotions of your mind; the delicacy of her ſex, and the dignity of her character, require that ſhe ſhould reſent the injury which both have ſuſtained. Can you ſay, even if her treatment of you had been more haughty than it is, that you have not deſerved it? O my Lord, reſtore to her but that heart, to which ſhe has an indiſputable right, and her behaviour, releaſed from the conſtraint which well-founded ſuſpicions have impoſed upon it, will appear equally as amiable to you as it has hitherto done. I am perſuaded ſhe loves you:—nay her not being indifferent to the change ſhe has perceived in your ſentiments amply proves it."

"I am not deceived, in the ideas I had formed of what would be your conduct on this occaſion," ſaid Lady Merton, ſeizing the hand of Auguſta; which ſhe condeſcended to preſs to her lips; "you are dearer to me than ever."

"And

"And can my mother expect me to witneſs ſuch perfection, and yet ſo eaſily forego the extatic hope of calling ſuch a treaſure mine?" exclaimed Lord Merton. "It is impoſſible! I never can ceaſe to adore Miſs Denbeigh; and I will never conſent to marry Miſs Merton!"

"And will the rejection of the one," replied Lady Merton, "put you in poſſeſſion of the other? And is it thus that my ſon would repay the affectionate ſolicitudes of his parents? Does his duty to a fond mother, his regard to his own character, require no ſtruggle againſt an attachment which is altogether hopeleſs?"

"Not hopeleſs," cried Lord Merton. "O my mother! extricate your unhappy ſon but from the miſery of an union with Miſs Merton, and his ardent devotion to Miſs Denbeigh will ſurely procure her pity: His whole life ſhall then be entirely employed in gratitude to her, who from the gift of life has not with-held happineſs."

Lady Merton was much affected by this ſolemn appeal to her feelings.

"Merton," ſaid ſhe, "the happineſs of my life depends on that of yours. I leave you to your own choice; but take care in deciding upon your future conduct, that you leave no room for reflection to embitter your peace, ſince the comfort of your mother is involved in it."

Lord Merton, in extacies at this unexpected conceſſion of his mother, threw himſelf upon his knees before her; but could not articulate his thanks. Auguſta, who beheld this ſcene of tenderneſs with great emotion, now roſe from her ſeat, and approaching that of Lady Merton, fell upon one knee by the ſide of Lord Merton.

"Amiable, beſt of mothers, and of friends!" exclaimed ſhe, "ſuffer me thus to bend in gratitude,

tude, and in admiration before you! And do you, Lord Merton, deeply as you ſee me impreſſed with a ſenſe of Lady Merton's goodneſs, and the honour you have done me, hear, and receive my irrevocable determination. Had not my heart been occupied by a predilection in favour of another, I fear my fortitude could not have withſtood that ſtrength of affection which has conquered even the judgment of your mother: But I rejoice in my own miſery, ſince that places an irremediable barrier between us. Yes, my Lord, what nothing elſe but the conflict I now witneſs could have extorted from me, I will now confeſs, I am, like yourſelf, the victim of an unfortunate paſſion. The object of it neither knows, nor ever ſhall know, the influence he poſſeſſes here; but oh, (lifting her ſtreaming eyes to heaven) no one elſe can ever ſhare the ſmalleſt portion of my affection!"

Lady Merton and Lord Merton were ſo ſtruck by her energetic manner, that they neither of them attempted to interrupt her; and ſhe thus proceeded:

"Do not therefore, Lord Merton, ſuffer yourſelf to be deluded by the hope that perſeverance can produce a change in my way of thinking; for whatever trials may await me through life, I will never give my vows to one man, whilſt my heart is in the poſſeſſion of another."

"I will, at leaſt, then," ſaid Lord Merton, mournfully, "imitate your example."

"No," replied Auguſta, "you cannot do it without a crime. Inſignificant and independent as I am, to whom do any of my actions afford an intereſt? I may live for myſelf, ſince I have now no kind friend, whoſe foſtering care has a claim upon

upon my duty, on the renunciation of my own feelings: But you, Sir, are differently ſituated; the laſt deſcendant of a noble family, you owe many duties to them, and to your exalted ſtation. If theſe obligations have loſt their force, there is another motive which I am convinced will have its full weight with you. Conſider that your mother, but a few moments ago, yielded to your ſupplications, and you will not ſurely refuſe to her tenderneſs the ſacrifice which it ſo greatly merits."

"Deareſt Auguſta," cried Lady Merton, raiſing her, and ſtraining her to her boſom, "how much do I regret, that any objections ariſe to prevent my having the happineſs of calling you daughter; but you ſhall be ever to me the firſt and moſt valued friend of my heart."

"If I could not emulate the magnanimity of this excellent creature," ſaid Lord Merton, "I ſhould indeed be unworthy of my mother. If I cannot be bleſſed with her hand, I am indifferent to my fate; give me therefore but a little time, and diſpoſe of me as you pleaſe. I will make my peace with Miſs Merton, and obtain her conſent to reviſit the continent, from whence I will try to return wholly obedient to your will."

"Suffer me," ſaid Auguſta, "to oppoſe this deſign. My abſence is the only thing requiſite, and I go from hence to-morrow morning. When a certain happy event has taken place, Lady Merton will reſtore to me her friendly protection."

"Do you imagine," exclaimed Lord Merton with energy, "that I will conſent to ſuch an arrangement? Oh, no! could I ever recover my reaſon, whilſt I reflected that you were made a ſufferer

ſufferer by my folly? Speak, madam, (addreſſing himſelf to Lady Merton) and put a negative to this, or I relapſe again. Friendleſs and lovely as you are, you ſhould not for worlds quit the aſylum my mother's affection affords you."

"No," ſaid Lady Merton, "that would ill repay the gratitude I owe to my ſweet Auguſta, and in truth inflict upon myſelf a puniſhment, I could but ill endure. The knowledge Lord Merton has of Miſs Denbeigh's ſentiments, and the promiſes he has given me, inclines me to hope, that all may yet be ſettled without any ſeparation taking place."

"To convince you that my efforts are ſincere," anſwered Lord Merton, "I will go and preſent myſelf at Miſs Merton's dreſſing-room door, and try if I can bring her down to dinner in good humour."

When he had left the room, Lady Merton renewed her careſſes of Auguſta, and gave to her conduct every appellation which could ſooth or gratify a mind poſſeſſed of ſuch exquiſite ſenſibility as her's.

CHAP. XXIV.

WHEN the party aſſembled at dinner, they fortunately received an addition by the arrival of two gentlemen, friends to Lord Merton; for otherwiſe, the various reflections which ingroſſed their thoughts, muſt have rendered them very indifferent companions.

Miſs

Miſs Merton was ſolemn; but as ſhe could evidently perceive that Lord Merton was unhappy, and ſhe imagined it proceeded from his having offended her, ſhe was more complaiſant to him than uſual. She however ſeemed to wiſh that ſhe could forget there was ſuch a perſon in company as Auguſta; and that ſhe might not be reminded of it, averted her eye from the ſide of the table where ſhe was placed. Not that ſhe viewed her in the light of a rival; her vanity had prevented ſuch a ſurmiſe as that.

Her diſlike of Auguſta aroſe merely from her being, as ſhe underſtood, a very inſignificant perſon; and as ſuch, very undeſerving of the diſtinctions which Lady Merton paid her. She believed that rank, fortune and birth were ſolely what could entitle people to reſpect, and ſhe conſequently never paid any to thoſe, who were deſtitute of ſuch recommendations. She had in reality as great a degree of contempt for Mr. William Simpſon as ſhe had for Auguſta; but ſhe had found him, as ſhe thought, an admirer of Miſs Denbeigh's, and believed him now the ſlave of her ſuperior attractions. Beſides this, he adopted all her opinions, however whimſical, for which reaſon ſhe thought him the only civil being ſhe met with at Merton Lodge, and treated him with more cordiality than ſhe ſhewed to any one elſe. This to the ſelf-important Mr. Simpſon, was encouragement enough; and on this ground only, he had boaſted to his father of the probability of his ſucceſs. Could ſhe even have conjectured his preſumptuous hopes, ſhe would have baniſhed him for ever from her preſence; for ſhe had given to his paſſion for her, no other ſentiments, than thoſe of the moſt perfect adoration, which ſhe believed were juſtly her due.

Auguſta

Anguſta received permiſſion from Lady Merton to retire to her own apartment at a very early hour. She had pleaded fatigue, and her countenance plainly told that ſhe wanted reſt; yet this repoſe was not what ſhe retired to enjoy: A buſy ſcene awaited her, and her heart ſunk within her as ſhe aſcended the ſtairs. The taſk ſhe had prepared for herſelf was no other than the packing up of her cloaths; for ſhe had no ſooner perceived the propriety of quitting Lady Merton's houſe, than ſhe was confirmed in her reſolution to do ſo; and her mind, ever actively intent upon what ſhe believed to be her duty, immediately preſented the plan for her departure.

Previous to her going down to dinner, ſhe had diſpatched a note to the neighbouring town, to order a chaiſe to be at the park gate, at four o'clock the next morning; and as that was an hour ſhe knew none of the family would be ſtirring, ſhe thought ſhe could readily eſcape from the houſe, unobſerved. The only difficulty which occurred was, how to get away her cloaths. This ſhe could not do without the aſſiſtance of the ſervants. To Lady Merton's footman, the man who had left her in town when ſhe had been alarmed by the cry of a mad dog, ſhe therefore applied, and entreated that he would have one of the labourers in waiting, to convey a trunk to the porter's lodge, which ſhe told him ſhe was about to ſend to London, by ſome one of the carriages that paſſed that way; and ſhe appointed him to come to her dreſſing-room for it, juſt before the family ſat down to ſupper. As there was no appearance of myſtery in this, the footman promiſed to obey her orders punctually; and indeed if he had been made acquainted with the whole of her deſign, he thought himſelf ſo much obliged to her for her forgiveneſs

forgiveneſs of a fault which would have occaſioned his being diſcharged from Lady Merton's ſervice, if it had been divulged, that he would have rendered her all the aſſiſtance in his power. The cloaths were ſoon placed in the trunk, and herſelf equipped in a proper dreſs for travelling; and about ten o'clock the two men arrived and conveyed it from her apartment.

She now ſat down to her writing table, and began an epiſtle to Lady Merton; but her tears fell ſo faſt, that it was with difficulty ſhe could purſue her employment, and ſhe could not find words adequate to expreſs the various ideas which crowded into her mind. Diſſatisfied with her letter, yet doubtful if ſhe could write a better, ſhe at length ſealed it, and addreſſed it to Lady Merton. It contained the following words:

"I yield to the neceſſity of a cruel deſtiny, and quit the manſion of my beloved and honoured benefactreſs. Ah, madam! could you witneſs the agonies which I endure at this moment, you would own, that a high ſenſe of duty could alone ſupport me in the conflict. Friendleſs, and unknown, you reſcued me from impending evils, and poured the balm of affectionate pity into my wounded heart. Can any ſufferings I undergo be too great for the obligations I owe you? Ought I not, even with my life, to preſerve the peace of her from whom all mine has long been derived? I am the guiltleſs diſturber of the happineſs of your family; but I truſt, my voluntary exile from it, will be the means of reſtoring that harmony which I have unfortunately interrupted. Your ſon need not now quit his ineſtimable Mother—and Miſs Merton will no longer be tormented with the ſight of an object, which I believe, though

though I know not from what cauſe, has been extremely diſguſting to her. All endeavours to diſcover the retirement I have choſen will be fruitleſs; and I therefore hope none will be made. The joyful news of Lord Merton's marriage can alone induce me to quit it: When I ſhall fly to regain the felicity I now forego, and devote to my beſt and only friend the remainder of that life, which ſuch a hope alone renders deſirable to her unhappy

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH.

Auguſta now drew up her window curtains, and throwing herſelf into a chair, ſat watching the approach of morning. The ſtable clock at length told the hour of four, when ſhe quitted her chamber, and treading lightly, ſoon gained the hall; the door of which ſhe eaſily unbarred, and cloſing it gently after her, traverſed the lawn with a quick pace. She found the chaiſe at the park gate, and bidding the driver awake the woman who kept the lodge, for the trunk, and then make the beſt of his way towards London, ſhe drew up the blinds. At firſt ſhe began to congratulate herſelf, on having ſo well effected her departure; but the ſpirits which ſupported her on the occaſion being exhauſted, her reflections ſoon took a different turn, and ſhe began to view the ſtep ſhe had taken with more rigid ſcrutiny. Although acting from an impulſe of conſcious rectitude, ſhe began to fear that her judgment might have involved her in errour. The manner of her quitting Lady Merton's houſe, had in it ſomething ſo extremely romantic, that ſhe ſhrunk from the contemplation of it: next, the buſtle it would occaſion, and the conjectures that would be

be formed by thoſe who were ignorant of the cauſe, preſented themſelves to her ſickened imagination: And laſtly, though not leaſt, the conſtructions which Mr. William Simpſon and Miſs Merton might put upon her flight. Ought ſhe not to have ſtaid and obtained the permiſſion of Lady Merton, to her leaving her? Yet the impetuoſity of Lord Merton ſeemed to render that impracticable, and the attempt might have produced conſequences more unpleaſant to each. Thus by turns accuſing and juſtifying herſelf, did the poor traveller paſs her time; and if ſhe could not give a decided acquital to her own conduct, the reflection, that her intentions had a moral baſis, at leaſt preſerved her from that moſt dreadful of all ſentences, *ſelf condemnation.*

Lady Merton roſe late that morning, and being anxious to know how Auguſta was, ſhe tapped at her door. No reply being made, ſhe opened it, and her conſternation was inexpreſſibly great, when ſhe perceived that ſhe had not been in bed. She paſſed haſtily into her dreſſing room, and her eye inſtantly caught the letter addreſſed to herſelf, which lay on the writing table. She trembled ſo violently that ſhe opened it with difficulty; and when ſhe had read it ſhe preſſed it to her lips, and then went in ſearch of Lord Merton. She found him walking in the ſhrubbery, and in ſo deep a reverie, that he did not perceive her till ſhe ſpoke. She held out the letter and ſaid, "This magnanimous girl has left us."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Merton, who inſtantly conceived who his mother meant, "Where can ſhe go? I will directly purſue, and reſtore her to you."

"No,"

"No," ſaid Lady Merton, "her generous deſigns ſhall not be fruſtrated. She is miſtreſs of herſelf, and could have left us whenever ſhe choſe; but ſhe has adopted this mode, even though it has expoſed her to malevolent ſuſpicions, rather than conteſt a point in a way in which ſhe knew ſhe could not ſucceed. Read her letter. Excellent creature! It ſhall indeed be my care to render her future days happy."

Lord Merton returned the letter to his mother, but ſpoke not.

"I wiſh," ſaid ſhe, "if poſſible, to conceal, eſpecially from Miſs Merton, that Miſs Denbeigh quitted us without our knowledge. What can be done?"

"My dear mother," replied Lord Merton, "I am ſo completely wretched, that I am alike incapable of judging or acting as I ought. All that I can at preſent ſay, is that I ſhall quit England in a day or two; and that if you wiſh the reſtoration of my peace of mind, you will then take this lovely friendleſs girl under your protection again."

The ſettled melancholy with which he ſpoke this, deterred Lady Merton from purſuing the ſubject farther. She therefore only re-urged caution before Miſs Merton, and they proceeded to the breakfaſt parlour.

The caution was however wholly unneceſſary, for Miſs Merton ſeemed not to be aware that Auguſta was abſent, and made no inquiries after her. She aſked Lord Merton if he had not an head ach. He anſwered, "Yes; for that he had received letters which had diſturbed him, and he feared he ſhould be obliged to return to the Continent for a month or ſix weeks."

Fortunately ſhe placed this melancholy to the account

account of his leaving her; and had therefore no ſuſpicions of the real cauſe of it.

CHAP. XXV.

AUGUSTA arrived in London without meeting with any accident, and was ſet down at Mrs. Mills's in Bond-ſtreet. The good woman was quite rejoiced to ſee her, "For," ſaid ſhe, my brother and ſiſter are making conſtant inquiries after you, and I knew not how to anſwer them. David and Mary, they write me word, can get no peace, becauſe they have not heard any thing about you for ſo long a time."

Auguſta ſatisfied herſelf about the health and welfare of theſe faithful friends, and then ſuffered herſelf to be conducted by Mrs. Mills into her dining room, which occupied the front of the houſe on the ſecond floor; who perceiving her to be greatly fatigued, propoſed ſhe ſhould take the refreſhment of a diſh of tea, and then go to bed. This advice was gladly purſued by Auguſta, and ſhe ſoon conſigned herſelf to that repoſe, which ſhe ſtood ſo much in need of.

Mrs. Mills's houſe was neat, and there was an appearance of comfort in her family, which ſomewhat tranquillized the agitated ſpirits of Auguſta: Yet as this could not be a permanent ſituation, and ſhe knew her finances to be inadequate to her ſupport, without ſome efforts of induſtry,

induſtry, ſhe determined to ſpeak, without reſerve, of her ſituation, to Mrs. Mills.

"I ſuppoſe," ſaid ſhe to her one day, when they were alone, "that your friends have told you I am poor, or in the language of the world, in diſtreſs. I rely upon your kindneſs to point out to me ſome creditable employment, by which I can procure a livelihood; and if ſuch an one can be found, as will enable me to remain in your lodgings, I ſhall be happy; otherwiſe, I muſt ſoon remove to ſome more humble, and better adapted to my circumſtances."

Mrs. Mills, who in the early part of her life had felt the "chilling gripe of poverty," was far unlike the generality of thoſe, who having made a fortune by ſome lucky chance, in a forgetfulneſs of the evils they have endured, grow callous to the wants of others. Her mind retained all its primitive ſimplicity, notwithſtanding ſhe had been grand prieſteſs at the altar of faſhion, or in other words, a milliner, for upwards of forty years; during which time ſhe had fairly amaſſed as much money as ſatisfied her ambition, and now began to think of retiring from buſineſs.

The manner of Auguſta, perhaps more than her ſpeech, added to the little ſhe knew of her hiſtory, excited the ſympathy of the kind hearted Mrs. Mills.

"My dear young Lady," replied ſhe, "ſet your mind at reſt at preſent. The goodneſs of the Almighty, ſeconded by my own endeavours, have bleſſed me with more than I want; and I reſtore but part, to him who gave all, when I afford ſuccour to the unfortunate. I have no uſe for my rooms, and you are welcome to remain here till you can do better.

better. Something will offer to you in time, and till it does, make yourſelf as happy as you can."

Auguſta was much affected by this diſintereſted proof of the goodneſs of Mrs. Mills's diſpoſition. She made her acknowledgments in the livelieſt terms; but would conſent to treſpaſs upon her no longer than until ſhe could eſtabliſh herſelf in ſome way or other.

Reading, work, and drawing of patterns for Mrs. Mills's people to embroider from, now entirely filled up Auguſta's time, as ſhe could never be prevailed upon to go abroad, except upon a Sunday, when ſhe regularly attended Mrs. Mills to the neareſt church, to hear divine ſervice. As they were returning home one Sunday morning, through a little alley, which ſhortened their walk, a miſerable object ſolicited their relief. The ſight of the man convinced Auguſta of the extent of his wretchedneſs; and though poor herſelf, the comparative view of her own affluence ſtruck her ſo forcibly, that ſhe drew a guinea from her purſe, and held it out to him. The poor wretch enfeebled by ſickneſs as well as want, in his eager haſte to ſeize a ſum, which had not for a long time met his eye, fell to the ground. Auguſta gave a loud ſhriek, believing that he had fallen dead at her feet; and her cry brought a woman from a cellar, who, if poſſible, ſurpaſſed the former object, in the miſery of her appearance. Her weakneſs was ſo great, that her efforts to raiſe him were ineffectual; neither could he aſſiſt himſelf: Auguſta entreated Mrs. Mills to aid her in lifting him up, and then deſcended into the cellar with theſe two unfortunate aſſociates in human wretchedneſs. So dreary an abode her

eyes

eyes had never yet beheld: A bed of ſtraw in one corner, and a kettle in which a few potatoes had been boiled, conſtituted the whole furniture.

"Is it an angel," cried the man, in a hollow voice. "See here," giving the guinea to the woman.

"Lay out that," ſaid Auguſta, "inſtantly in ſomething that may adminiſter to your recovery, and I will ſee you again, and inquire into your further wants."

They both lifted up their hands and bleſſed her.

"There are houſes near," ſaid Mrs. Mills, "from which you may procure meat and broth: Which of you is beſt able to fetch it?"

The man inſiſted upon going, and Auguſta and Mrs. Mills remained with the woman until he returned. She then told them that her huſband was in the laſt ſtage of a conſumption; that he was a native of Ireland, and that ſhe, though an Engliſhwoman, had no friends to apply to, having forfeited their countenance by marrying as ſhe did; that their diſtreſſes had reduced him to the employment of a chairman, which his increaſing ill health had obliged him to give up; and that ſince then their cloaths and furniture had all been pawned, to procure them ſuſtenance. Want, watching, and fatigue, ſhe ſaid had brought on a fever which had reduced her to the ſituation they ſaw her in; and that ſhe had indeed prayed hourly, to be releaſed, with her poor huſband.

Auguſta quitted them, with an aſſurance, that they ſhould ſoon ſee her again; and when ſhe arried in Bond-ſtreet, ſhe begged of Mrs. Mills

to ſend for her apothecary; to whom ſhe related their morning adventure, and entreated of him to viſit the poor wretches, and ſee if any thing could be done for them by proper medical aſſiſtance.

He ſoon returned, and informed her, that the woman might ſoon grow well by taking bark and good nouriſhment; but that the man could not long ſurvive. She commiſſioned him to ſend the medicines and cordials he thought requiſite, and determined to ſee them again the next morning.

At an early hour, and attended by a maid ſervant of Mrs. Mills's, who carried them ſeveral articles of apparel, which her miſtreſs had ſent, Auguſta ſallied forth to viſit this abode of miſery again. She found both the man and his wife ſo much better, that her heart was dilated with happineſs at the ſervice ſhe had rendered two fellow creatures. She charged the woman to come to her often, both to tell her how they went on, and what they wanted; adding that they would continue to aſſiſt them, until ſhe could place them in a way of doing for themſelves. Their gratitude was unbounded; and Auguſta departed, loaded with their prayers and bleſſings.

As ſhe had now been near a month in London, ſhe began anxiouſly to turn her thoughts to the event which ſhe hoped might by that time have taken place at Merton Lodge. As the news papers were her only ſource of information, ſhe daily examined them with ſome care. One day her eye caught an advertiſement for the creditors of a certain banker, to apply for a dividend which was to be made of his effects, and ſhe thought the name was the ſame

ſhe

ſhe had ſeen in the ſecurity ſhe had in her poſſeſſion from Mr. Euſton's banker. She examined and compared her papers with the advertiſement, and was convinced they were both the ſame; and not knowing how ſhe was to act, or indeed whether ſhe could make a claim, ſhe determined to conſult Mrs. Mills.

Mrs. Mills, almoſt as great a ſtranger to thoſe ſort of things as Auguſta, adviſed her to apply to an attorney; and was made ſo happy by the proſpect of her good fortune, which ſhe ſaid ſhe had prognoſticated, that ſhe inſtantly ſet out with the writings to a lawyer of her acquaintance, who promiſed her to make the neceſſary inquiries the following day, and inform his client of the reſult of them.

Mrs. Davies, which was the name of Auguſta's penſioner, called upon her in the evening, and with tears told her, that her poor huſband, now declined rapidly. Auguſta knew there were no hopes of his life, and therefore would not deceive her by deluſive expectations. She rather tried to prepare her for the worſt; and in order to ſupply comfort to her drooping ſpirits, told her, that Mrs. Mills had promiſed ſhe would conſtantly employ her in work, ſo that ſhe might earn a good livelihood in her widowed ſtate; and that ſhe would always be a friend to her. She diſmiſſed her with another mark of her benevolence, and bade her to get ſome of the people of the houſe to ſit up with her, for they had before this removed into a more comfortable lodging. That night the poor man died, and his laſt breath was ſpent in prayers for Auguſta, who gave orders

for him to be buried in a decent way, and gave his widow wherewith to buy herſelf mourning.

She had but juſt diſmiſſed the perſon who brought her the news of Davis's death, with this meſſage, when Mrs. Mills entered the room, her eyes ſparkling with pleaſure.

"My dear young Lady," cried ſhe, "God never ſuffers ſuch good actions to go unrewarded. Here is Lawyer Manſal below in my parlour, and he ſays you will recover fifteen hundred pounds from the banker. Pray come to him. If it were as many thouſands you deſerve it all."

Auguſta ſmiled at her kind friend; and almoſt doubting ſome miſtake in this flattering account, followed her down ſtairs.

Mr. Manſal then informed her, that there was a dividend to be made of ten ſhillings in the pound, and that as her debt was three thouſand pounds, ſhe would conſequently receive fifteen hundred. She returned him her thanks for the alacrity with which he had communicated the news to her; and after ſhe had given him inſtructions to receive the money for her, and place it out at intereſt, he took his leave.

Whoever had ſeen Mrs. Mills would have concluded, that ſhe were the perſon benefited by this diſcovery, inſtead of Auguſta, ſo great was the exuberance of her joy: but indeed, Auguſta's ſweet and amiable manners, together with her goodneſs, had made ſo great an intereſt in the heart of Mrs. Mills, that ſhe might literally be ſaid to doat upon her.

"As I am now ſo rich," ſaid Auguſta, laughing, "it is right that I ſettle my debt of gratitude

to

to you, though I never can repay all that I owe you; your kindneſs to me has exceeded any return I can make: However, you muſt now conſider me the regular tenant of your rooms, and fix the ſtipend I am annually to pay you, from the day you received me into your houſe."

"Indeed, madam," replied Mrs. Mills, "if you talk ſo, I ſhall think I have offended you. Ouragreement was, that you ſhould remain here until ſomething fell out that was more agreeable. I ſhould have kept my word if it had not happened theſe dozen years; and yet you break yours."

"How ſo?" ſaid Auguſta. "Has not the moſt unexpected good fortune really befallen me?"

"Yes," anſwered Mrs. Mills; "but you are not bettered by it yet. From the day on which you receive your fifteen hundred pounds, I will date your commencing my boarder: And I cannot in conſcience do it an hour ſooner."

Auguſta could not contend againſt the ſcruples of this good woman; ſhe however prevailed upon her to mention the ſum ſhe was to pay, which was moderate, and inſtantly acceded to.

Mrs. Davies was ſoon ſettled in a neat little room, near to Mrs. Mills's, from whoſe ſhop ſhe had a conſtant ſupply of work. She owned herſelf to have been much employed in millinery formerly, and indeed, from her converſation and ingenuity, Auguſta began to ſuſpect that ſhe had been brought up in ſome way ſuperiour to her appearance; but as ſhe always evaded this ſubject, Auguſta deſiſted from queſtion-

ing her. Her gratitude, and indeed her whole deportment was ſo pleaſing, that her patroneſs every day grew more partial to her, and felicitated herſelf on having ſaved ſo worthy a creature from deſtruction.

All this time ſhe gained no intelligence of the Merton family; and at length her impatience became ſo great, ſhe aſked Mrs. Mills if ſhe could deviſe any means to make inquiries after them, without its being ſuſpected, from what quarter they were made.

Mrs. Mills told her nothing was more eaſy, for that without doubt a ſervant muſt be left to take care of the houſe in town, and under pretence of buſineſs, ſhe could readily learn how they all were. Auguſta then gave her her commiſſion, which was to enquire after the health of Lady Merton, and whether ſhe was expected in London early in the enſuing winter; and alſo, whether Lord Merton was married; or if not, how ſoon his marriage was to take place. The latter part of her inſtructions confirmed Mrs. Mills in a ſuſpicion ſhe had long entertained of Auguſta's being in love; for her declining all company and never going abroad, convinced the good woman that ſhe was not happy, and to any other cauſe than love ſhe knew not now how to attribute her not being ſo. In a mind ſo well diſpoſed as hers, pity was always the moſt predominant ſenſation; and ſhe therefore determined to get every thing out of the ſervant, which related to Lord Merton, that Auguſta might not be diſappointed of the information which ſhe believed her moſt anxious about.

On her arrival at Lady Merton's houſe, in Argyle-ſtreet, the door was opened by an elderly woman,

woman, of whom ſhe enquired when her Lady would be in town.

"Not ſoon that ſhe knew of," was the reply.

Mrs. Mills then aſked how ſhe did; and added that ſhe ſuppoſed the wedding of Lord Merton would detain her in the country.

The ſervant anſwered that the wedding, ſhe ſuppoſed, was put off, for that Lord Merton was gone abroad.

"That, I fear," ſaid Mrs. Mills, "will make his mother very unhappy."

"Without doubt," the woman replied, "ſomething muſt be the matter between them; for that the young Lord had come to town, and been all alone in that houſe for ſeveral days before he went away, and looked very melancholy."

"Aye, aye," cried Mrs. Mills, who ſpoke however from mere conjecture, and from the hope of hearing ſomething that would pleaſe Auguſta, "they want to marry him to a Lady he does not like, I ſuppoſe."

"Belike enough," replied the woman; "and for the matter of that, I did hear Tom, my Lord's footman, ſay, that he was ſure my Lord had rather have Miſs Denbeigh, who is more prettier a good deal than Miſs Merton, and ſo good humoured, that ſhe is not above ſpeaking to any of her own fleſh and blood."

"And, pray," aſked Mrs. Mills, "where is Miſs Merton now?"

"With my Lady, I believe," replied the woman.

"And pray where is Lord Merton?"

"At ſome outlandiſh place that I have for-

got," ſaid ſhe; "but I know Tom ſaid he did not think my Lord would come back in a hurry; and indeed he cannot, for it is over ſea that he's gone, that I'm ſure of."

"I ſhall wiſh to know when your Lady returns to town," ſaid Mrs. Mills, willing to prepare a future reception for herſelf, "and I will therefore call again." She then bade the woman good morning.

Before ſhe had reached Bond-ſtreet, ſhe had entirely ſettled all theſe circumſtances in her own mind: And as her great partiality for Miſs Denbeigh led her to think that ſhe was deſerving of any Lord whatever, ſhe became incenſed againſt Lady Merton, for wiſhing her ſon to marry any other woman, whilſt his heart was Auguſta's. She firſt briefly related, that Lady Merton was in the country, and that Lord Merton was gone abroad.

"Abroad!" exclaimed Auguſta, "to be married? Has he taken his lady with him?"

"No, indeed," replied Mrs. Mills. "Miſs Merton is at the lodge with her Ladyſhip, and from what I can learn, you have no reaſon to fear that ſhe will ever become the wife of Lord Merton."

"What is it you tell me?" cried Auguſta. "Pray relate to me all that you heard."

"The ſervant," anſwered Mrs. Mills, "was a very civil woman; ſo ſhe told me that her Lord would not ſtay in England, and be married to Miſs Merton, becauſe he was in love with another lady. She ſaid he was ſo ill that he was confined to the houſe for ſome days before he went abroad; and that his man told her he was ſure they ſhould not come back of a long time. What a cruel

mother

mother Lady Merton muſt be," continued Mrs. Mills; "but if you wiſh it, madam, I am ſure I can find out my Lord's direction."

"By no means," replied Auguſta, bluſhing at the inference which ſhe plainly perceived Mrs. Mills had made, "My ſolicitude is on the poor mother's account, who is far from being the cruel parent you ſuppoſe her."

This aſſurance Mrs. Mills did not at all credit, though ſhe affected to believe it. However, as it convinced her that Auguſta did not mean to repoſe a confidence in her, ſhe very properly dropped the ſubject.

This account, which Auguſta could not doubt the truth of, greatly afflicted her. The diſappointment of Lady Merton; the illneſs and exile of Lord Merton, were ſufficient to render her unhappy; but when added to theſe ſhe contemplated the little chance there appeared of her being ſoon re-united to her friend, and that the report of Lord Merton's being attached to her, which ſhe found from Mrs. Mills, was ſpoken of in the family, might for ever prevent her being ſo, her anguiſh became ſtill more acute. To purſue her preſent mode of life—to live without enjoying the beauties of the creation—to be debarred from the refined pleaſures which the ſociety of an enlightened friend can alone beſtow; was but to drag on a wretched exiſtence. Yet how could it be avoided? She had no wiſh to mix in the ſociety now within her reach; and the want of a proper introduction prevented her having acceſs to any other: Beſides, even if that could be obtained, it would only throw her in the way of Lady Merton, and prove that her boaſted retirement was merely oſtentatious. Often, during this melancholy review of her ſituation, did the idea

of returning to thoſe ſcenes which had alone witneſſed her happineſs, preſent itſelf to her: Yet, alas! what could ſhe now meet with there, but objects which would renew her grief, without affording a balm for it. The little pleaſure ſhe had received from an intercourſe with the world, almoſt tempted her to renounce it; but her heart, ſhe knew not why, recoiled from the thought. Theſe reflections ſo perpetually preſented themſelves, that a melancholy imperceptibly ſtole upon her, which ſhe was unconſcious of, and therefore did not ſtrive to reſiſt. Mrs. Mills however ſoon perceived the alteration which ſo viſibly took place, and attributing it to the unfortunate partiality which ſhe believed to exiſt between Lord Merton and Miſs Denbeigh, ſhe unceaſingly propoſed ſome amuſements, which ſhe hoped might divert her thoughts into a different channel.

No perſuaſions however could induce Auguſta to viſit the places of public reſort, which Mrs. Mills would have recommended. Her languor daily increaſed, and Mrs. Mills became ſo much alarmed that ſhe propoſed her going into the country, for change of ſcene and air.

She told her that a widow lady, a cuſtomer of hers, who had loſt her huſband, in the ſervice of the Empreſs of Ruſſia, and who had a neat little houſe at Brompton, wiſhed to take ſome lady to board with her, and had actually applied to her, to recommend ſuch a one. The good woman almoſt with tears entreated Auguſta to go there for a ſhort time; adding that her avocations would not permit her to attend to her as ſhe could wiſh; that Mrs. Brudenell was a cheerful good ſort of perſon, and ſhe was ſure would do every thing in her power to make her happy, and accompany her to take the air in Kenſington gardens, near to which her houſe was ſituated.

The

The laſt ſuggeſtion had ſome weight with Auguſta, who had attributed her indiſpoſition entirely to the want of exerciſe; and ſhe at length ſuffered her kind friend to negociate the matter with Mrs. Brudenell. A few days ſufficed for this, and ſhe ſoon removed to Brompton. She was rather ſurpriſed at the appearance of Mrs. Brudenell, who was dreſſed with extreme elegance, and had the remains of much beauty; for ſhe had figured to herſelf a retired, quiet character, with manners and habit correſponding to the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained, of a huſband whom ſhe had doated upon. Her reception of Auguſta was eaſy and friendly, and ſhe ſeemed diſpoſed to treat her with unreſerved kindneſs.

This was flattering to Auguſta, and in part contributed to obliterate the unfavourable impreſſion which the firſt ſight of her had given, for there was in fact a certain boldneſs in the manners of Mrs. Brudenell, which had been to her exceſſively diſguſting. The neatneſs of the garden, now blooming with autumnal flowers; the green fields, and in the back ground, the tall trees of Kenſington Gardens, already tinted with the variegated and beautiful hues of approaching winter, gave emotions of pleaſure, long a ſtranger to her mind.

She took poſſeſſion of the neat apartment aſſigned to her, and from her window contemplated theſe objects with a degree of luxury, until ſhe was ſummoned down ſtairs to dinner.

Mrs. Brudenell propoſed cards in the evening, but as Auguſta was unacquainted with the uſe of them, they ſat at their work, and paſſed it pleaſantly enough in converſation.

Mrs. Brudenell's mind was not of the ſpeculative ſort, neither was it ſtored with that kind of infor-

information which is to be derived from books; but ſhe had abundant knowledge in the articles of news, dreſs, and faſhion, and could relate anecdotes, or give the private hiſtory of moſt of the great families in the kingdom.

As Auguſta had not the vanity to think ſhe poſſeſſed talents to amuſe Mrs. Brudenell, ſhe had the complacency to be amuſed by her; or at leaſt to appear ſo: For the tranſactions of people to whoſe very names ſhe was a ſtranger, could neither arreſt her attention, or intereſt her feelings.

The morning was lovely, and the ladies paſſed part of it in Kenſington gardens: and thus, with the interruption only of a viſit now and then, from the few neighbours who aſſociated with Mrs. Brudenell, glided away a month; in which time Auguſta's health was conſiderably amended. Mrs. Brudenell had indeed often ſolicited her to go to town, and profeſſed that ſhe was particularly fond of a play; but her reſolution could not be ſhaken; ſhe declined her importunities however in a manner that prevented the impoſſibility of an offence.

CHAP. XXVI.

THEIR walks had been hitherto taken at ſo early an hour, that they had ſeldom met many perſons, eſpecially thoſe of a faſhionable appearance; but the weather having one day prevented their going out at the uſual time, it was ſo late before

before they arrived in Kenſington Gardens, that Hyde-Park appeared crowded with company. Auguſta wiſhed to turn into thoſe walks which were not ſo much within view of the people who were riding; but Mrs. Brudenell profeſſed herſelf ſo much diverted with the droll figures that were exhibiting themſelves, that ſhe could not be prevailed upon to leave the ſcene of ſo much amuſement. At length a groupe of gay young men rode very near them, and ſeemed to obſerve them ſo particularly, that Auguſta began to be alarmed, and preſſed Mrs. Brudenell ſeriouſly to return home; and her conſternation became great, when ſhe ſoon afterwards ſaw that they had quitted their horſes, and entered the garden. Mrs. Brudenell laughed at her fears, and was for proceeding; but ſhe inſiſted upon turning back, and the other was obliged to comply. Notwithſtanding they walked faſt, they were ſoon overtaken by the gentlemen, who then kept their pace, as if they were determined to join them. They frequently whiſpered each other, and then burſt into a loud laugh; and it was evident that each was urging the other, to begin a converſation. At length one, who fancied himſelf perhaps the beſt qualified for the taſk, cried out, "Egad ladies, you are the beſt walkers I have met with."

"And you," retorted Mrs. Brudenell, "are the moſt troubleſome companions we have ever ſeen."

Auguſta was extremely hurt at this reply; for ſilent contempt, ſhe thought, would beſt have checked the impertinence of theſe obtruſive young men.

"Oh," exclaimed another of the gentlemen, "can we do otherwiſe than purſue when you fly."

"If

"If you had good manners," replied Mrs. Brudenell, "you would at leaſt deſiſt when you ſee how diſagreeable it is to us."

"I," ſaid the firſt ſpeaker, looking at the terrified Auguſta, "ſhall receive my diſmiſſal from that Lady only; whoſe lovely mouth, I am ſure, cannot pronounce ſo cruel a ſentence."

"Her eyes," ſaid Mrs. Brudenell, "might convince you of the diſpleaſure you have given her, although ſhe is ſilent."

"Her eyes!" exclaimed he, in affected rapture, "they dart forth ſo many attractions, that curſe me if I could not ſooner die at her feet than leave her."

This horrid ſpeech had ſo great an effect on Auguſta, that Mrs. Brudenell could hardly ſupport her, ſhe trembled ſo violently.

"I'll tell you what," ſaid Mrs. Brudenell, "if you don't leave us, I ſhall call to the ſentinel."

Here the gentlemen all ſet up a loud laugh; and one who had not ſpoke before, ſaid, "I ſhould like to ſee the ſpirit of this ſilent friend moved; but thou, I am ſure, couldſt not be guilty of ſo uncharitable an act."

"You ſhall ſoon be convinced of that," replied ſhe, quickening her pace, as they were now within ſight of the entrance to the garden.

"Come along," ſaid the gentleman who had firſt ſpoken, "ſhe is faithful to her truſt, and there is no getting a word from her pretty companion." And ſo ſaying, they turned off another way.

Auguſta's fears had not ſubſided, even when they reached Mrs. Brudenell's houſe, who rallied her on her want of ſpirits, and told her ſuch things frequently occurred when ladies walked without

without a protector of the other ſex. This however did not reconcile her to the circumſtance, for ſhe had frequently walked with Lady Merton, and in theſe very gardens, without meeting with an inſult; and ſhe began to ſuſpect that there was ſomething of a levity in the air of her companion, which had invited it. The fearleſs way in which ſhe had entered into converſation with the gentlemen, confirmed her in her ſuſpicions, and ſhe determined to be more upon her guard in future. Indeed ſhe ſcrupled not to ſay, that ſhe would walk no more in Kenſington Gardens, at an hour when ſuch ſort of people were abroad, and that ſhe wiſhed, if any body accoſted them in ſuch a way again, that Mrs. Brudenell would give them no reply. Mrs. Brudenell proteſted, that but for her reſolution, ſhe believed they ſhould not have got rid of them ſo eaſily; but promiſed to do as Auguſta wiſhed her another time.

Mrs. Mills now made a viſit to Auguſta; and the good creature had again been to Argyle-ſtreet, that ſhe might carry her ſome further information of the Merton family. She had learnt from the ſervant, that news had arrived of Lord Merton's being in a bad ſtate of health, and that his mother was ill in conſequence of it. That Miſs Merton was ſtill with Lady Merton, and took on her mightily, as the woman ſaid, "for that no one ever believed, ſhe loved my Lord at all." She added that if her Lady grew better, ſhe meant to go abroad to her ſon, and that it was imagined Miſs Merton would accompany her. Although this was news which Mrs. Mills believed would not prove very acceptable, yet ſhe related it faithfully, being willing that Auguſta ſhould know the worſt.

It was indeed a dreadful piece of intelligence to her. She longed to preſent herſelf to Lady Merton, to ſooth her diſtreſſes, and to ſupport her on the bed of ſickneſs. But Miſs Merton was with her,—and her appearance muſt therefore be improper. Miſerable, however, as ſhe felt, to hear ſomething more of the real ſituation of her beloved friend, ſhe could deviſe no other means to obtain it, but by writing; which ſhe inſtantly ſet about: her letter was as follows:

"How ſhall I deſcribe to my dear Lady Merton the anguiſh of mind which I ſuffer from the dreadful news which has juſt been conveyed to me: I am told that you are ill—that Lord Merton has left England, and that he alſo is in a bad ſtate of health. Is it poſſible! Can the good God who gave to a friendleſs orphan ſuch a benevolent ſupporter, have made her eventually the cauſe of ſo much miſery! Oh, madam, relieve me from the agonies I ſuffer, by telling me that you are better, and by laying your commands upon me, if any thing in my power can contribute to the reſtoration of your peace. Gladly would I lay down a life ſufficiently imbittered by the affliction it occaſions others, to enſure comfort to your future days! I ſhall ſend every evening into Argyle-ſtreet, in hopes that you will direct a letter to be left for me there. Your benevolent mind, will, I am ſure, receive pleaſure in hearing, that ſome extraordinary coincidence of fortune, have rendered me independent, and placed me with worthy people.

"Deareſt Lady Merton, until ſhe hears from you, how wretched will be the exiſtence of

Your

AUGUSTA DENBEIGH."

Mrs.

Mrs. Mills conveyed this letter to town, and promiſed that it ſhould be depoſited in the poſt office that very night: She likewiſe engaged to ſend a meſſenger with the reply, to Brompton, the very moment it ſhould come into her poſſeſſion.

The third morning from that was the earlieſt day in which Auguſta could expect an anſwer: Time never paſſed ſo tediouſly with her before. Indeed her muſic (for ſhe had procured a piano forte) her books, and her work, were all thrown aſide, and ſhe ſpent the whole day in anxiouſly watching for the appearance of a meſſenger, although it was totally impoſſible for ſuch a one to arrive ſo ſoon. At length, however, ſhe perceived Mrs. Mills approach the houſe, and received from her a letter: But what ſhe had been waiting for with ſuch extreme impatience, now that ſhe had it in poſſeſſion, ſhe hardly durſt look at, ſo greatly fearful was ſhe of having the bad news confirmed. She retired to her own room, and found the following lines:

"Your letter, my dear Miſs Denbeigh, has eaſed my heart of one of its many ſolicitudes; for to quit the kingdom, without knowing that you were comfortably ſituated, and without giving you an aſſurance of my unceaſing regard, gave me inexpreſſible pain. Yes, my ſweet and meritorious friend! the magnanimity of your conduct, and your attention to my happineſs, demand from me all that gratitude and affection ought to pay to ſuch exalted goodneſs. The news of my ſon's illneſs, and my ignorance of your fate, brought on an indiſpoſition from which however I am now recovering ſo faſt, that I hope to be able to ſet out for Nice, where Merton is,

in

in leſs than a fortnight. Do not torment yourſelf, my dear Miſs Denbeigh, with the idea that you have occaſioned me any calamities. Human foreſight cannot diſcover the deſigns of an ever-guiding Providence, which, when it appears to afflict us moſt, is bringing about the means of our felicity. The illneſs of my ſon, and the ſtate of danger to which I have been reduced, has wrought ſuch a change in Miſs Merton, that I am firmly perſuaded we ſhall all rejoice in our ſufferings. She has attended me with unremitting tenderneſs; and ſhed ſo many tears for Merton, that I am convinced her heart is entirely his. She firſt propoſed our journey to Nice; and the proof it will give my ſon of her attachment to him, which he has hitherto doubted, I know will have its proper influence on ſo generous a mind as his.

"I ſo frequently repeated your name during my illneſs, that Miſs Merton entreated my permiſſion to ſend for you; which I however refuſed; and perhaps for the only reaſon which could have induced me to do ſo, the not knowing where to direct a meſſenger to you. She really ſhared in the pleaſure your letter gave me; and as I am ſtill too weak to leave my bed for any length of time, ſhe offered to be my amanuenſis, adding that her behaviour to you had been ſo rude and unkind, that I might fear to truſt her; but, that ſhe was conſcious of her fault, and would avail herſelf of the opportunity to entreat your pardon. This proper ſenſe of her former follies, gives me firm hopes that Merton's affection for her may be revived; and that their marriage may take place, before we return to England. It is then that I ſhall claim the promiſe of my moſt

dear

dear Miſs Denbeigh; whoſe ſociety will beſtow the ſincereſt pleaſure on her

Affectionate and maternal friend,

THEODOSIA MERTON.

"P. S. Let me hear from you before I go, and give me your addreſs, that I may write to you during my abſence."

Auguſta peruſed this epiſtle ſeveral times before ſhe could be perſuaded of its reality; and her joy was great in proportion to the anxiety ſhe had before ſuffered. She diſpatched a letter to Lady Merton, by Mrs. Mills, in which ſhe gave way to the emotions which now agitated her mind. She alſo acquainted Lady Merton with her preſent ſituation, and the means by which ſhe had become poſſeſſed of fifteen hundred pounds; and deſired her letters might be addreſſed to her at Mrs. Mills's, in Bond ſtreet, from whence ſhe ſaid they would immediately be forwarded to her.

CHAP. XXVII.

RELIEVED from the inquietudes which had ſo long preyed upon her ſpirits, Auguſta's health and natural cheerfulneſs ſoon returned: And as her motives for a ſtrict retirement were now at an end, ſhe was no longer ſcrupulous about going abroad.

Mrs.

Mrs. Brudenell, in whoſe manners there was ſomething ſo repellant to Auguſta, that ſhe could never perſuade herſelf to give her the ſmalleſt ſhare of her confidence, was ſurpriſed at this change of ſentiment; ſhe did not however neglect to avail herſelf of it, and prevailed upon Auguſta to viſit Kenſington Gardens again. They walked there one fine Sunday morning, at the hour when the gay inhabitants of the metropolis reſort thither, to breathe the freſh air, and ſaunter away time. The recollection of the adventure which they had met with in the ſame place, made Auguſta unwilling to enter the walk which appeared to be moſt full of company; but Mrs. Brudenel aſſured her, and with truth, that they ſhould find protection from the crowd; and ſhe therefore ſuffered herſelf to be perſuaded to mingle with it.

As it was yet too early in the winter for many perſons of faſhion to be in London, ſhe ſaw little chance of meeting with any of Lady Merton's acquaintance to whom ſhe was known; and in this conjecture ſhe was not miſtaken, as ſhe did not meet a ſingle perſon of whoſe face ſhe had any recollection. If this circumſtance gave her pleaſure, ſhe was nevertheleſs hurt at the general obſervation which ſhe and her companion ſeemed to excite. Some exclamations, which ſhe could not help hearing, on her beauty, inſtead of removing, increaſed her confuſion; and ſhe remarked, with ſome ſurpriſe, that although Mrs. Brudenell was profeſſedly well acquainted with London, ſhe met with no one who appeared to know her. She was herſelf dreſſed with the greateſt ſimplicity; but Mrs. Brudenell, who piqued herſelf on her taſte, or rather that of her milliner,

was

was arrayed in that ſort of faſhionable elegance which borders on the extreme. This ſtriking oppoſition in their appearance, at laſt preſented itſelf to Auguſta, as the cauſe of ſo much notice and as particularity of any ſort was diſagreeable to her, ſhe pleaded fatigue, and begged to return home. As they were turning down a different walk, in order to do ſo, Auguſta heard ſomebody cry out in a loud whiſper, "Who can that lovely creature be;" and turning her eyes involuntarily to the ſide from whence the voice proceeded, ſhe beheld Mr. Devereux in the midſt of a large party of gentlemen and ladies. He ſeemed to have perceived her but at that moment; and advancing from his company, exclaimed with much animation, "How happy am I made by the unexpected pleaſure of meeting with Miſs Denbeigh!"

Auguſta perceiving that his party ſtood ſtill with the viſible intention of ſcrutinizing them, was too much embarraſſed to make any reply; which Mr. Devereux obſerving, moved forward, as though he meant to attend her in her walk.

"How lucky," ſaid he, "that I was prevailed upon to come here; I did not know the happineſs which awaited me, when I conſented with ſo much reluctance."

"Have you been long in England?" aſked Auguſta, hardly knowing what ſhe ſaid.

"No," he replied, "not many days; and thoſe have been devoted to my father, who is confined with the gout, or I ſhould otherwiſe have paid my reſpects to Lady Merton. I hope ſhe is well."

"Lady Merton is not in town," ſaid Auguſta; "and has been very ill: She is now preparing to

ſet

ſet out for Nice, where Lord Merton is, who has alſo been much indiſpoſed."

"I am greatly concerned to hear it," replied Mr. Devereux: and after a pauſe of a moment he added, "May I aſk where Miſs Denbeigh's reſidence now is, in the hope that ſhe will permit me ſometimes to have the honour of inquiring after her health?"

"I am at preſent with that Lady," anſwered Auguſta, without being ſufficiently collected to introduce them to each other.

Mr. Devereux, who had been ſo lately abſorbed in the pleaſure of ſeeing her, that he had not in the leaſt regarded her companion, now looked at her with more attention, and a great degree of ſurpriſe. He however bowed to her, and inquired after her health in a name, which, though Auguſta could not plainly diſtinguiſh it, appeared very different from that of Brudenell. She ſeemed alſo to be under ſome reſtraint, but ſoon recovered herſelf, and anſwered his inquiries with an unembarraſſed air.

Mr. Devereux, from having been extremely gay, was now become thoughtful and irreſolute. He however proceeded with them, and at laſt ſaid, "Have you ſeen Lady Merton lately?"

"Not very lately," replied Auguſta. "I believe it is full four months ſince I quitted Merton Lodge."

Another pauſe enſued; at length, turning to Mrs. Brudenell, he ſaid, "In what part of the town do you reſide, madam?"

"I do not live in London," replied ſhe, "but in a houſe near to this place, where I ſhall be always happy to ſee Mr. Devereux."

"Suffer me then," ſaid he, with a ſigh which he

he ſeemed unconſcious of, "to ſee you ſafe home."

"Auguſta, though averſe to this, did not think it proper to make any objection: and Mrs. Brudenell, who now appropriated the civility to herſelf, ſeemed much pleaſed with it: The party, therefore, proceeded, though Mr. Devereux's perplexity appeared little ſhort of that of Auguſta's: Arrived at length at Mrs. Brudenell's houſe, he declined her preſſing ſolicitations to enter it, and with a viſible dejection of ſpirits took his leave.

Mrs. Brudenell now put fifty queſtions to Auguſta, reſpecting her acquaintance with Mr. Devereux; to which ſhe anſwered with as much indifference as ſhe could aſſume, that ſhe had ſometimes ſeen him, though not often, at ſome of her friends' houſes. Mrs. Brudenell then became his exceſſive encomiaſt, and declared that ſhe thought him the moſt charming young man ſhe had ever ſeen.

"Your acquaintance with him, madam," ſaid Auguſta, "muſt have been of a much longer date than mine, ſince I think he called you by a different name to that of Brudenell, and you have ſurely been a widow for ſome years."

"We have not met each other for ſeveral years," replied Mrs. Brudenell, "and our intimacy was not very great; ſo that I do not wonder at his not recollecting my right name."

This excuſe would have lulled the ſuſpicions of Auguſta, had not the ſurpriſe of Mr. Devereux, on the firſt ſight of Mrs. Brudenell, and his ſubſequent chagrin convinced her, that ſomething myſterious, and beyond her conjectures, muſt have produced ſo great a change in his behaviour. When he firſt accoſted her, joy animated

his

his features; and he had inquired with earneſtneſs, where he might pay his reſpects to her: Yet after this, he had conducted her home, without hardly ſpeaking a word, and he had parted from her, without any renewal of his intention of ſeeing her again, or even the appearance of any remaining ſolicitude about her. This was ſo unlike his former behaviour, ſo very different from his laſt converſation with her, every word of which was diſtinctly imprinted on her memory, that the more ſhe thought about it, the more inexplicable it appeared. Occupied by theſe ſort of reflections, ſhe was frequently abſent, and inattentive to Mrs. Brudenell's converſation; who, with a freedom which ſhe had never uſed before, began to rally her upon being ſo ſerious; attributing it to the ſight of Mr. Devereux. This intimation alarmed and diſpleaſed Auguſta; who however only anſwered coolly, "That ſhe thought Mrs. Brudenell had been ſo long accuſtomed to ſee her thoughtful, that ſhe would not have aſcribed any new cauſe for what was ſo very uſual."

Mutually diſſatisfied with each other, they ſeparated at an early hour.

CHAP. XXVIII.

MRS. BRUDENELL's time of riſing was ſo late, that Auguſta generally breakfaſted alone. She had juſt ſat down to her ſolitary repaſt; when to her infinite ſurpriſe, ſhe ſaw Mr. Devereux alight

alight at the gate, and in a moment he entered the parlour.

"I knew," ſaid he, "that Miſs Denbeigh did not ſacrifice the morning to her pillow; and as mine could afford me no repoſe until I had ſeen her again; I quitted it more than two hours ago, and have been ſauntering hereabouts until I thought ſhe would be at breakfaſt."

"I am glad," returned Auguſta, with a ſmile, "that you have ſo well gueſſed the time; for after ſo long a ride, I ſhould imagine you are heartily diſpoſed to partake of it."

"I will not refuſe to ſhare it with you," replied he, "though ſuch an intruſion as mine intitles me not to the reception you give me."

"Then," replied Auguſta, "I perceive that my fears were not unfounded. Such ſuſpicions muſt convince me, that I have been ſo unfortunate as to offend Mr. Devereux, and that he has withdrawn from me that friendſhip with which he has hitherto honoured me."

"Good God!" exclaimed he, "is it poſſible that you can have thought, that the man who reverences, who adores you, ſhould have ever ceaſed to think of you with admiration and eſteem? But yet what other inference could you draw from my behaviour yeſterday morning, inconſiſtent and capricious as it muſt have appeared. To explain that is the motive of my preſent viſit; and yet I greatly dread, that the explanation may add to my offences inſtead of mitigating them."

"Fear it not," replied Auguſta. "Mr. Devereux's heart cannot be influenced by caprice; and his motives, whether they relate to me or himſelf, will be heard with gratitude from my friend and monitor."

"How amiable is this condeſcenſion," ſaid he;

"but I wanted no new proofs of Miſs Denbeigh's goodneſs. The queſtion I would aſk, the inquiry I would firſt make," continued he, heſitating, "is whether you have long been acquainted with the lady you are now with."

"No," replied Auguſta; "ſhe is in fact a ſtranger to me."

"I thought ſo—I believed ſo," continued Mr. Devereux, "and yet I was ſo ſhocked at ſeeing you aſſociated with a woman of reproachable morals, that I loſt my recollection, and quitted you without knowing how I was to act."

The glowing cheeks of Auguſta now became overſpread with a deadly paleneſs. Mr. Devereux obſerved it, and ſeizing her hand, which he preſſed to his lips, ſaid, "The pain I inflict upon you, is inferior, greatly inferior to what I myſelf endure; but it was neceſſary that to ſecure your ſafety, I ſhould thus alarm your delicacy."

He pauſed, and Auguſta ſtill remaining ſilent, he ſaid, "Will you not pronounce my pardon?"

"Your pardon!" cried Auguſta, faintly, lifting up her eyes, which were filled with tears. "O Mr. Devereux! I can find no words to expreſs my preſent emotions! Even ſuppoſing you are miſinformed reſpecting the character of Mrs. Brudenell, which I am willing to hope, how can I ever thank you ſufficiently for this mark of your kind and diſintereſted attention to me!"

"No information," replied he, "could have led me to doubt the character of any perſon whom Miſs Denbeigh honoured with her notice: An actual knowledge of their real ſituation, was abſolutely requiſite for that. I have long known Mrs. Brudenell, if that be the name ſhe aſſumes; and whatever may be her preſent mode of life; that

that in which ſhe has formerly moved, muſt for ever render her an unfit companion for you."

"I can then have no further doubts," ſaid Auguſta; "but I owe to you and myſelf the hiſtory of the commencement of my acquaintance with this woman ——"

No," cried Mr. Devereux, interrupting her, "neither to me or to yourſelf do you owe it. You cannot be more juſtified in my opinion, than you are already, and I have my reward in the ſervices I have rendered you."

"My conduct in conſequence of that," replied Auguſta, "will convince you of the high value I ſet upon it. Alas! I but too well remember, that in the laſt converſation we had together, you warned me of the dangers I had to apprehend: Yet left to my own guidance, how can I avoid misfortunes of whoſe very exiſtence I am totally ignorant. Oh, why at this criſis am I deprived of the protection of Lady Merton?"

Her tears, which fell in abundance, greatly affected Mr. Devereux. He walked about the room in much agitation; and was at laſt advancing to ſay ſomething of evident import, when his eye caught the watch which Lord Euſton had given to Auguſta, and which then hung at her ſide. He ſtopped ſhort; his voice failed him; and his limbs ſeemed to have loſt the power of motion. At length he exclaimed, "O Euſton! envied poſſeſſor of ſuch a treaſure! why do you abandon this lovely creature to thoſe ſorrows which you alone can alleviate?"

Auguſta looked at him with ſurpriſe. "Lord Euſton," ſaid ſhe, "do you ſpeak of? Why, does Mr. Devereux ſuppoſe that Lord Euſton could either influence my mind, or alleviate my ſufferings?"

"I would ſupplicate your pardon for my temerity," replied Mr. Devereux, with much confuſion, "but I do not deſerve it. I did not however mean to lay claim to that confidence which you withhold from me. The expreſſions aroſe from a diſtraction of thought, and a wiſh of ſerving you."

"My pardon," ſaid Auguſta, "I cannot give you, becauſe you have not offended. My confidence, however, I can beſtow; and who is it that has ſo juſt a claim as yourſelf? Your ſolicitude for my welfare demands my utmoſt gratitude: and your diſintereſted friendſhip, ſo well proved by pointing out to me the dangers of my preſent ſituation, intitle you to my unreſerved eſteem. Speak then, and without heſitation tell me, why with ſo much emotion you called upon Lord Euſton."

"O Miſs Denbeigh," anſwered Mr. Devereux, "how amiable, how tranſcendently amiable is your mind! Encouraged thus ſweetly, I will own —I will tell you why ſuch unguarded expreſſions eſcaped my lips. I will lay open to you the whole hiſtory of my heart."

Auguſta bowed, and he proceeded. "The moment in which Lord Euſton and myſelf firſt beheld you, was I believe alike fatal to the repoſe of each. Our ſtay at Mr. Euſton's, ſhort as it was, diſcovered too many perfections to be reſiſted. With an ingenuous candour Lord Euſton firſt confeſſed his paſſion to me. I concealed mine, and imagined—ah, how vainly imagined —— that I could conquer it. A younger ſon, and with ſlender expectations, what had I to oppoſe to his pretenſions, even if I could have been guilty of the diſhonourable deſign of endeavouring to ſupplant him? I quitted England; but I carried with

with me ſentiments that rendered my days miſerable. Some domeſtic arrangements brought me home, and I had a packet to deliver to Lady Merton from her ſon. I called in Argyle-ſtreet one morning early, and was ſhewn into the breakfaſt parlour, where to my inexpreſſible ſurpriſe, I ſaw drawings ſcattered upon the table, which I knew to be yours. My emotions were uncontroulable. I flew to Lord Euſton's houſe, to inquire whether you were indeed in town, and I had the mortification of ſeeing you his viſiter at that early hour, though I believe you did not perceive me, as he was putting you into a chair when I reached the door."

"Indeed," cried Auguſta, interrupting him, and bluſhing highly, "it was a moſt extraordinary accident which led me to his houſe that morning."

Mr. Devereux appeared not to notice her confuſion, and proceeded thus. "My fears perhaps produced too eaſy a belief; for I no longer doubted but that a mutual attachment ſubſiſted between you, and as I was not able to aſſume fortitude ſufficient to witneſs it, I determined, under pretence of urgent buſineſs, once more to quit my native ſoil. An unſolicited opportunity gave me the melancholy pleaſure of a ſhort converſation with you at Lady Merton's, where I firſt heard of the death of Mr. Euſton."

"I well remember," exclaimed Auguſta, in a tremulous voice, "the apprehenſions you expreſſed; alas! they have been but too well verified."

"My apprehenſions," continued Mr. Devereux, "aroſe from my knowledge of Lord Seaton. I trembled for the conſequences of a partiality which I knew would never be ſanctioned

by his conſent. Your happineſs was dearer by far to me than my own; but to hint at your ſituation would have been preſumptuous; and in my ſtruggle to ſuppreſs what I felt, I fear ſome expreſſions eſcaped me, which muſt have appeared inconſiſtent, if not ridiculous."

He pauſed; but Auguſta was too much affected by his laſt ſpeech, to attempt giving him any anſwer; he therefore continued thus:

"Confirmed in my ſuſpicions, I reviſited the continent, from whence I ſhould not yet have returned, had not the alarming ſituation of my father required it. A gouty habit, abounding alſo with a complication of other diſeaſes, has reduced him to ſo dangerous a ſtate, that his phyſicians pronounce he cannot long ſurvive. The importunities of ſome of my friends, led me to Kenſington Gardens laſt Sunday morning. My joy at meeting you was unutterable; it occaſioned a momentary forgetfulneſs of the engagements I believed you under. Pardon me if I now confeſs, that it all vaniſhed when I perceived who the Lady was with whom you were aſſociated."

"I too well perceived," cried Auguſta, with downcaſt eyes, "that ſomething extraordinary occaſioned ſo ſudden a change: But whether to look for it in you, Mrs. Brudenell, or myſelf, I was equally at a loſs; and that you left me without an explanation, gave me real pain."

"I left you," continued Mr. Devereux, "to reflect on the conduct I was to purſue; and ſuppoſing that Lord Euſton's abſence might originate from his father's diſcovery of the attachment between you, and that the neceſſity of a concealed ſituation, had induced you to ſeek refuge

ſuge in the houſe of a woman with whoſe unworthineſs you were unacquainted, I heſitated not long before I reſolved to ſee you, to inform you of your real ſituation, and to implore, that, as the friend of Lord Euſton, you would command me to ſerve you."

Perceiving that he waited her reply, Auguſta, though with viſible embarraſſment ſaid, "Your generous deſigns meet, as they deſerve, my warmeſt gratitude. A wiſh for retirement has indeed brought me to this ſpot; but not from any of the motives you have conjectured. As it has not eſcaped your penetration, I will own to you, that I believe Lord Euſton did honour me with ſome portion of his regard; but I had little difficulty in perſuading him, that his rank and family required the renunciation of a partiality, the object of which was every way unworthy of his affection; ſince if no other obſtacle had ariſen, an inſurmountable barrier would have been found in her own inſenſibility. I have now no ſort of intercourſe with him, neither do I know in what part of the world he is: But his happineſs I never can be indifferent to, becauſe he is the nephew of Mr. Euſton."

"Lovely, and moſt beloved Miſs Denbeigh," exclaimed Mr. Devereux, his expreſſive countenance animated by renewed hope, "what an unexpected happineſs does this condeſcending avowal open to my view! Oh complete the bliſs of this preſent moment, by telling me that your heart equally diſclaims any other preference; your devoted, your adoring Devereux will then flatter himſelf, that time, and his ardent aſſiduities——"

"Hold," ſaid Auguſta, interrupting him in a gentle but collected manner; "you have given me your confidence, and it is now your turn to receive mine. The ſituation you ſaw me in at Mr. Euſton's could give you no idea of my being the child of misfortune: Yet ſuch I am. My parents are even unknown to me: and abandoned by them, at an early period of infancy, I muſt have periſhed a miſerable outcaſt, had not the good, the benevolent Mr. Euſton received, nouriſhed, and adopted me."

Mr. Devereux, deeply affected by the mournful, yet calm recital of Auguſta, could utter no more than an inarticulate homage to the virtues of Mr. Euſton: She therefore proceeded.

"His death was haſtened by the failure of his banker. It reduced me a ſecond time to a ſtate of indigence, and that was a blow which his affection for me rendered inſupportable to him. That Providence, which never forſakes the wretched, introduced me to the knowledge of Lady Merton, at a time when my oppreſſed ſoul almoſt ſunk under the weight of its afflictions. Her goodneſs to me you have witneſſed. It has never been withdrawn; but an unpleaſant occurrence in her family, which will ſoon be removed by the marriage of Lord Merton, rendered a temporary ſeparation neceſſary. On my arrival in town, chance diſcovered to me that Mr. Euſton's banker was dividing his effects among his creditors; and from him I received a ſum of money, which, though ſmall in the eſtimation of others, is ſufficient for that ſimple ſtyle of life which it is my wiſh to adopt. A reſidence in the neighbourhood of London was moſt

moſt eligible, on account of the conſtant intelligence I hope to receive from Lady Merton; and a friend to whom I applied, equally unſuſpicious with myſelf, found out for me, as ſhe I am ſure thought, a comfortable abode in the houſe of Mrs. Brudenell."

Here Auguſta pauſed; and Mr. Devereux paid her his fervent acknowledgements. He then revived the ſubject of his heart, and in the moſt impaſſioned words implored her acceptance of him.

"Has not the hiſtory I have given you of myſelf," ſaid Auguſta, "convinced you of the impropriety of your propoſals?"

"It has only added," replied Mr. Devereux, with energy, "ſympathizing pity to perfect admiration. It has only ſtrengthened the extatic hope, that if I am permitted to call you mine, I ſhall enjoy the exquiſite delight of rendering your future days happy."

"How can I repay ſuch exalted generoſity!" exclaimed Auguſta.

"Oh," cried Mr. Devereux, "by giving me a place in your affections, which will confer upon me more than the whole univerſe beſide can beſtow."

"No," replied Auguſta, "I will make you the return I ought, by convincing you that an obſcure girl, without connexions, and without fortune, is an improper wife for Mr. Devereux. His family would diſclaim her——the world would ridicule his choice——and he would ſoon and too fatally feel the folly of ſuch irremediable imprudence."

"No, never!" replied Mr. Devereux. "The approaching diſſolution of my poor father, will ſoon leave me reſponſible to no one for

my conduct: And the opinion of the world can have no weight with me, where it oppoſes itſelf unreaſonably againſt my choice of happineſs. Ah, Miſs Denbeigh, I ſee the inſenſibility of your heart. You do not pity my ſufferings——you have no intention to relieve them."

"You do me injuſtice," ſaid Auguſta, in much agitation. "I reſpect——I eſteem——I *ever have* eſteemed Mr. Devereux. But can I prove it by ſuffering him to degrade himſelf by ſuch a choice? Ah, if you could read my heart, or view its preſent ſtruggles, the agonies which it coſts me to give you this advice, would convince you that it ought to be purſued. If ever heaven diſcovers my parents to me, and they are ſuch as Mr. Devereux can without a bluſh acknowledge, the inſenſibility, of which he reproaches me———"

"Oh!" cried Mr. Devereux, interrupting her, "do not drive me to diſtraction, by naming ſo diſtant and uncertain a period. I ſtruggled againſt my paſſion when I believed it hopeleſs; but now the only impediment is removed, I cannot again ſubmit to loſe ſight of all my earthly felicity."

Auguſta was beginning to reply when the door opened, and Mrs. Brudenell made her entrance. As the breakfaſt was gone cold, and had beſides the appearance of not having been touched, ſhe looked at them both with ſurpriſe, and aſked Auguſta if ſhe had not offered Mr. Devereux ſome breakfaſt.

Her confuſed reply, together with the ſilence of Mr. Devereux, excited a ſuſpicion very common to little minds, and inſeparable from guilty ones, that her premature entrance had interrupt

rupted a converſation of which ſhe had been the ſubject. She rang for her ſervant to bring in other breakfaſt things; and Mr. Devereux perceiving that it was impoſſible to renew his converſation with Auguſta, abruptly withdrew.

The ſurmiſe which had ariſen in the mind of Mrs. Brudenell, was not of that pleaſant ſort which could add much to her good humour. After a ſilence of ſome minutes, ſhe turned to Auguſta and ſaid, "It is very odd, Miſs Denbeigh, that a young man, with whom you *pretend* to have little acquaintance, ſhould make you a viſit at ſo unuſual an hour."

Auguſta was diſpleaſed as well as ſurpriſed at the freedom of this addreſs; however ſhe anſwered with her uſual gentleneſs, "I aſſure you, madam, the buſineſs which brought him hither was of great importance to me."

"No doubt of that," retorted Mrs. Brudenell, with an ironical ſmile. "But when we are next accoſted by *ſtrangers*, (and ſhe laid a deep emphaſis on the word) I hope I ſhall be ſurfeited with no more affected frights."

Such unexpected, and indeed undeſerved, rudeneſs, ſhocked Auguſta ſo much, that ſhe attempted no reply, but quitted the room; and in her way up ſtairs, meeting with Mrs. Brudenell's ſervant, ſhe diſpatched her for a coach. Fortunately the girl met one that was juſt then returning empty to London, and Auguſta perceiving it draw up to the door, ſtaid no longer than whilſt ſhe threw on her cloak, and then ordered herſelf to be drove to the houſe of Mrs. Mills.

CHAP. XXIX.

TO a mind ſo cautious of inflicting pain as was Auguſta's, it would have required ſome conſideration how to make a ſudden departure, without occaſioning ſurpriſe or offence. Mrs. Brudenell had however herſelf contrived the means, and ſpared her gentle ſpirit the diſagreeable taſk of making her intentions known: And the inſult ſhe had received, juſtified her in her own opinion, for abandoning the houſe without ceremony, which ſhe could not have done, had Mrs. Brudenell perſevered in her former civil deportment.

Arrived in Bond-ſtreet, ſhe briefly related to Mrs. Mills, that ſhe had diſcovered Mrs. Brudenell to be a woman of ſuſpected character, and that ſhe had experienced treatment from her which had compelled her to quit her protection. Mrs. Mills's concern was exceſſive; and though ſhe did not doubt an atom of what Auguſta had aſſerted, yet ſhe ſaid ſhe was determined to learn the whole from Mrs. Manſel, who had recommended her ſhop to Mrs. Brudenell.

She ſallied forth directly, and in leſs than an hour returned to Auguſta with the following hiſtory, which, with ſtrict injunctions of ſecreſy, ſhe had obtained from Mrs. Manſel.

Mrs. Brudenell was really the wife of a Mr. Brudenell, a gentleman of independent fortune, in Cornwall, with whom ſhe had lived in a moſt expenſive way of life, until his affairs were greatly deranged. During the time it was neceſſary for him to ſecrete himſelf, ſhe became acquaint-

acquainted with General Marſden, with whom ſhe ſoon after eloped. Mr. Brudenell, ſcorning to purſue a woman who had ſo baſely deſerted him, and too much hurt at the infamy of her conduct to continue in England, with the remains of his ſhattered fortune retired into Ruſſia, where he ſoon fell a victim either to a broken heart, or the changes of climate, which his ſituation in the army ſubjected him to. On the report of his death, his wife lived publicly with General Marſden, and paſſed by his name; but as he did not long ſurvive, ſhe was left about three years ago, with an annuity of two hundred pounds a year, which was bequeathed to her under the name of Brudenell, which ſhe then thought fit to re-aſſume. Mrs. Manſel added that Mr. Manſel, as attorney to the Marſden family, had the payment of this annuity; but that ſhe had kept up no farther intercourſe with her than that of occaſionally ſeeing her, when ſhe called upon her huſband for it. Her recommendation of Mrs. Mills, ſhe ſaid, had originated at one of theſe viſits; but that ſhe had made a much greater uſe of her name, than was ever intended.

When ſhe had finiſhed this account, Mrs. Mills ſet herſelf about repairing the evils ſhe had occaſioned in the beſt manner ſhe was then able to do. She ſent for Mrs. Davis, and diſpatched her in a coach to Brompton, to fetch Auguſta's cloaths, and to defray the pecuniary demands which Mrs. Brudenell had againſt her. Mrs. Davis was inſtructed to anſwer no queſtions, and indeed to have no ſort of altercation with Mrs. Brudenell. She acquitted herſelf of her commiſſion, and returned ſoon after the cloſe of the evening. In fact, it had been attended with no dif-

difficulties, which required the exertion of her prudence, for Mrs. Brudenell had given her free admittance into Auguſta's chamber, and ordered her own ſervant to aſſiſt in packing up her trunk; by whoſe hands ſhe had alſo received the offered payment; which, as it was more than ſhe could ſtrictly demand, ſhe had readily given a receipt in full for.

Auguſta and Mrs. Mills were glad to get rid of her in ſo eaſy a way. They did not, however, fail to animadvert on the fallacy of a ſpecious appearance, which had ſo far miſled the latter. Auguſta was amazed at her having wiſhed to engage with a boarder; but Mrs. Mills explained the reaſon, by hinting the difficulty which a doubtful or irreputable character had to obtain companions, to attend them to public places. She quickly ſaw why their walks in Kenſington Gardens had been attended with ſo much obſervation, and why they had been attacked in ſo free a way by the young men who annoyed them in the walks one morning; and ſhe could not enough felicitate herſelf, on having eſcaped the mortification of meeting any body there with whom ſhe had been formerly acquainted. The replacing of her cloaths, her books and her muſic, in their former ſituations, employed her for the remainder of the evening; and ſhe reſolved quietly to remain in thoſe apartments, until ſhe learnt ſomething deciſive from Lady Merton. Left at laſt to the undiſturbed poſſeſſion of her own thoughts, they recurred to the tranſactions of the morning, and ſhe yielded herſelf up to the delightful idea of being beloved by Mr. Devereux. His long attachment—his generoſity—the delicacy of his attentions, all ruſhed into her mind. The

parox-

paroxyſm was however of ſhort duration: Her own unfriended ſituation ſoon preſented itſelf to her view, and a deep melancholy ſuperceded her viſionary pleaſures. Her heart would have rebelled againſt her rejection of Mr. Devereux, but her reaſon approved of an effort, which his unequalled love, ſo well deſerved. She even rejoiced at the interruption Mrs. Brudenell had given them, and reproached her too yielding boſom for the confeſſion which ſhe had almoſt made. It then occurred to her, that ſhe had left no meſſage for Mr. Devereux, with the ſervant, if he called again. This gave her pain: But at length ſhe concluded, that he would certainly inquire from Mrs. Brudenell where ſhe was gone, who would not fail to inform him of the only probable place ſhe knew. In ſuch reflections as theſe, ſhe paſſed the greateſt part of the night. The morning arrived, and with it expectations, which ſhe could not conceal from herſelf. That, however, and the whole day paſſed without her ſeeing Mr. Devereux.

"Perhaps," ſaid ſhe to herſelf, "his father may be worſe. Or perhaps my arguments may have convinced him. Be it ſo. May he be ever happy and honoured, though I am miſerable."

Four more days elapſed in the ſame doubtful expectation. Auguſta then perſuading herſelf that Mr. Devereux intended to ſee her no more, exerted herſelf to regain her former compoſure. She however thought it inconſiſtent with the anxiety he had profeſſed, not to have aſſured himſelf of the eligibility of the ſituation ſhe had choſen. She knew the ſtrength of her own mind, and felt that if another interview had taken place, her adherence to her former reſolutions would have been uniform and rigid.

Mr:

Mr. Devereux might, however, think otherwiſe: He might think it moſt ſafe and prudent to avoid the danger of a ſecond converſation. Yet if ſo, there were means by which he might have aſſured her of his ſubmiſſion to the neceſſity of a ſeparation, which would have ſpared her the painful reflection, that ſhe was abandoned without regret: Or he might have conveyed inquiries which would have done away the appearance of neglect.

A letter which ſhe got from Lady Merton, afforded her abundant ſatisfaction. It was dated from Calais, where ſhe was ſafely landed; and at which place ſhe then waited, for paſſports through the French territories. She had not ſuffered at all from fatigue, and thought that her health daily amended. Her letter was filled with the moſt affectionate expreſſions, and concluded with an aſſurance that ſhe would write again, as ſoon as ſhe reached Nice.

Mrs. Mills, without declaring her intention to Auguſta, had, with officious kindneſs, again viſited Argyle-Street; from whence, however, ſhe collected no information of any importance.

As her motive was now become ſo viſible, Auguſta, in order to eradicate her ſuſpicions, ſhewed her Lady Merton's letter, and told her, that as ſhe ſhould now hear punctually from her friend, there was no farther occaſion for any inquiries being made in Argyle-ſtreet.

Her time now paſſed tranquilly, if not happily; but her wiſh for ſociety was ſo much abated, that ſhe confined herſelf entirely to the houſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

THE morning after Auguſta quitted Brompton, Mr. Devereux had indeed called again. As his viſit was not made at ſo early an hour as before, he was received by Mrs. Brudenell, of whom, as ſoon as the rules of good breeding would permit him, he enquired after Auguſta.

"I have not ſeen her," replied Mrs. Brudenell, with a very ſtately air, "ſince you left us yeſterday."

"Is ſhe ill?" anxiouſly aſked Mr. Devereux.

"Not that I know of," replied ſhe.

"Will you then, madam," ſaid Mr. Devereux, "do me the favour of ſending to inquire if I may be allowed the pleaſure of ſeeing her."

"That," ſaid ſhe, "is out of my power, as I know not where to apply to her."

"Has ſhe quitted your houſe," cried Mr. Devereux, with ſurpriſe.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brudenell.

"Will you have the goodneſs to inform me where ſhe went?" ſaid Mr. Devereux.

"O Sir," anſwered Mrs. Brudenell, "that you muſt know beſt. You did not perſuade her to leave my houſe, I dare ſay, without providing her with another place to go to."

Mr. Devereux felt his reſentment riſe at this inſinuation; but he checked it, and anſwered coolly, "That Miſs Denbeigh had friends among ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed families in the kingdom, to whoſe protection he ſuppoſed ſhe was gone; but as he had very urgent buſineſs with

with her, he ſhould be glad to ſee her without loſs of time."

"That," ſaid Mrs. Brudenell, with a malicious ſmile, "is very likely, when ſhe concealed herſelf ſo cloſely whilſt ſhe was at my houſe, that there was hardly any ſuch thing as prevailing upon her to venture out of doors."

"Miſs Denbeigh's inclinations might lead her to retirement," replied Mr. Devereux, endeavouring to ſtifle his anger; "and her character is ſo unſullied, that neither malice or envy dare affix a ſtain to it."

This ſpeech, which to Mrs. Brudenell ſeemed to include a reproach upon her own conduct, did not at all diminiſh her iraſcibility towards Auguſta. She had, in fact, penetrated into the deſigns of Mr. Devereux, and therefore determined to enjoy the malignant pleaſure of concealing the place of Auguſta's abode, on the diſcovery of which ſhe perceived he was ſo anxiouſly bent. Aſſuming a look of mingled ſcorn and indifference, ſhe anſwered, "If Mr. Devereux had not attacked reputations with more ſucceſs than he defends them, the object of his partiality would not perhaps have been out of his reach."

"I know not," ſaid Mr. Devereux, "what I am to underſtand by thoſe inſinuations; but your ſervant, madam, can perhaps give me the information I am in want of."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Brudenell, "you are deceived if you believe ſo. Miſs Denbeigh herſelf ſtopped a coach as it paſſed by, and left me without having the good manners to take any ſort of leave."

This account gained little credit with Mr. Devereux, who knew how incapable ſhe was of

of behaving with rudeneſs to any one. It even confirmed him more ſtrongly in the belief, that Mrs. Brudenell was acquainted with the place of Auguſta's retreat; and that ſuppoſing he had betrayed the hiſtory of her former life, ſhe concealed her knowledge of it, in order to take a revenge for the diſcovery he had made. His anxiety however to learn where Auguſta was, got the better of every other emotion, and he reſolved to try every means of bringing Mrs. Brudenell to the confeſſion.

"How is it," ſaid he, "that I have offended you, madam, ſince you thus anſwer me with unkindneſs, and trifle with my impatience? I would gladly embrace an occaſion to do you a ſervice, and yet you refuſe to oblige me, by the communication of an inconſiderable piece of intelligence, which you can be no way intereſted to conceal."

"O Sir," replied Mrs. Brudenell, "your profeſſions are made rather too late. Will you deny to me, that you have been the cauſe of Miſs Denbeigh's quitting my houſe ſo abruptly? Can you ſay that your buſy intelligence has not deprived me of her company? ſuch an ungenerous interference I deſpiſe; and if no other perſon in the world could diſcover her retreat to you, I here ſwear that you ſhould never know it from me."

"I will not deny," ſaid Mr. Devereux, riſing from his ſeat, "that my regard for Miſs Denbeigh is infinitely greater than my *veneration* for Mrs. Brudenell: And that whatever hints I thought it requiſite to give her, reſpecting her abode in this houſe, have been moſt amply juſtified by what I have heard this morning."

He

He then quitted the room without farther ceremony.

Mrs. Brudenell's rage was now unbounded; and she therefore more than ever desired to revenge herself upon Mr. Devereux. She now began to suspect, that Augusta really desired to be concealed from him, which might operate with her as a principal motive for leaving her house so suddenly; and she condemned herself for having been so hasty with her on the morning of her departure, as that she thought might have prevented the confidence which Augusta would probably have reposed in her. It was plain that Mr. Devereux had an attachment to her, and equally so, that if it had been mutual, she would have apprised him of her intentions, or at least would not have left him in suspence about her removal. Having thus settled the point, as she imagined her resentment towards Augusta abated, but its inveteracy against Mr. Devereux was increased. She recollected that he had said something about making an enquiry of her servant; and fearing that he should actually gain some intelligence from that quarter, she directly summoned the girl into the parlour and began to question her whether she had learnt any thing from Mrs. Davis. The answers soon convinced her, that she had nothing to apprehend.

In fact, Mrs. Davis had too much prudence to satisfy the servant's curiosity in any one respect; who had however asked her fifty questions about Augusta, and declared the sorrow she felt at her going away, adding, "That she was the most best, goodnaturedest person she ever saw."

Mr.

Mr. Devereux returned to London, diſſatisfied and dejected. His impatience to ſee Auguſta made him unhappy, though he had no doubt but that he ſhould ſoon learn the place of her retreat. Yielding however to the anxiety which the leaſt delay inflicted, he reſolved to diſpatch his man to Brompton that very evening, to try if he could obtain any information from Mrs. Brudenell's ſervant, which would direct his ſearch. He ſuſpected that ſhe would be tutored by her miſtreſs to conceal the little ſhe might know, and therefore inſtructed Willis how he was to proceed. The fellow, who was quick, and clever, executed his commiſſion with adroitneſs. He watched about Mrs. Brudenell's houſe, till he fortunately ſaw Mrs. Brudenell go to a neighbour's houſe at ſome little diſtance, attended by her ſervant, who carried a lanthorn to light her. He waited until the girl returned, and accoſting her juſt as ſhe entered the gate, deſired her to inform Miſs Denbeigh that he wiſhed to ſpeak with her.

"Lack-a-day," replied Suſan, "we haſnt Miſs Denbeigh with us now."

"No! ſaid Willis, "then pray tell me where I can find her, for I have a meſſage of very great importance for her."

"I'd before to tell you, if I knowd," anſwered Suſan, "for all my miſtreſs bid me not."

"You are an extreme civil, well behaved young woman," ſaid Willis, "and I am ſure, if you cannot tell me where ſhe is gone, you will at leaſt oblige me with all the particulars you know about her going."

"Yes," replied Suſan, "that I will truely, for Miſs Denbeigh's ſake, who is the ſweeteſt creature I ever ſee. Do you know then, that as

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ſure as we two ſtand here, Madam Brudenell ſcolded her ſo, that ſhe made her run away; for as I took ſome hot toaſt into the parlour, I heard her ſay, ſays ſhe, 'I hope I ſhall have no more detecting of ſtrangers,' ſays ſhe; and you muſt know there had been a ſtrange gentleman with her that very morning. And ſo then Miſs Denbeigh went up ſtairs, and put on her cloak and called me, and bid me ſeek for a coach; and, poor ſoul I ſeed that ſhe had been a crying. Howſomever I met a coach, and when I told her it was at the gate, ſhe ſaid I needn't follow her, and ſhe gave me half a crown to buy me a ribband, to wear for her ſake, and ſo I will, and wear it as long as I live."

"And I," ſaid Willis, "will give you another, to buy a ribbon to wear for my ſake. But pray did you hear her order the coachman where he was to drive her, or did you ſee the way that ſhe took?"

"No, indeed," anſwered Suſan; "for Madame Brudenell juſt then rung for me, and ſhe looked ſo croſs, I durſtne go out of doors to look. To be ſure, ſhe was ſorry enough when ſhe found Miſs Denbeigh did not come back again, and aſked me a bundation of queſtions, and ſo then ſhe bid me not ſay that I knowd any thing about her, if people cam'd, for to go about aſking any thing about her."

The ſimplicity of this relation convinced the ſhrewd Willis, that Suſan had told all that ſhe knew; therefore giving her the half crown, which he had promiſed, and telling her that he would call upon her again, the next time he came that way, he ſtole a kiſs from the lips of the aſtoniſhed Suſan, and then bade her good night.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

MR. DEVEREUX was involved in ſtill greater perplexities, by the account Willis gave him. He hardly could believe that Mrs. Brudenell dared uſe Auguſta ill, and yet from Suſan's ſtory it appeared ſhe had done ſo, and on his account. He at firſt thought of going to Mrs. Brudenell, even at that late hour, to tax her with her cruelty, and compel her to acquaint him where Auguſta had reſided before ſhe came to her, hoping by that means to trace her out: But this idea had in it too much raſhneſs; and was therefore ſoon diſcarded. In this ſort of painful uncertainty many days elapſed. His father's illneſs prevented his going into public, and indeed he knew that ſuch places of reſort were not likely to be frequented by Auguſta. He now began to accuſe her of cruelty and unkindneſs, and to ſuſpect that her departure was concerted between her and Mrs. Brudenell, and that the latter was enjoined to ſecrecy.

Inconſiſtent, and improbable as this was, the idea continued to haunt his imagination; and he at length determined to viſit Brompton once more: To try to appeaſe the indignation of Mrs. Brudenell, and ſoften her heart to the confeſſion he wanted.

On giving in his name, Mrs. Brudenell was denied. He ſent to entreat that ſhe would indulge him with a few moments converſation, intimating that he could not leave the houſe, until he had ſeen her. Her reply contained a ſolemn refuſal ever to ſee him again with her own conſent; together with ſome reproaches for his rudeneſs, in entering her houſe ſo freely; and finding

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it impoſſible to reverſe this ſentence, he was compelled to return to London.

The increaſing illneſs of his father, and his uncertainty about the fate of Auguſta brought on a deep melancholy. The phyſicians who attended Lord Sunderne, at length told him, that if he could be removed to Bath, and by drinking the waters, obtain a regular fit of the gout, his other complaints, to which they could adminiſter no further remedies, might be removed. Mr. Devereux, with true filial tenderneſs, urged him to the trial; and propoſed attending him. Lord Sunderne was with difficulty perſuaded to attempt it, dreading his want of ſtrength to perform the journey: However the entreaties of his ſon prevailed, and by ſlow ſtages they removed to Bath. His conſtitution, emaciated by a complication of diſorders, had not however ſtrength to produce the deſired fit of the gout; and he continued to live in a lingering painful ſtate of exiſtence. Mr. Devereux ſcarcely ever quitted his apartment, reſolving to watch the glimmering remains of life, and to ſooth its laſt moments, with the tender cares of affectionate duty. His father and Auguſta engroſſed every thought. The awful moment was faſt approaching, when he was to be ſevered from the former, and the latter, he believed, had for ever renounced him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

AS Auguſta ſat at work one morning, ſhe was told that a lady wiſhed to ſpeak with her; and before ſhe could once conjecture who it could be, Miſs Simpſon entered the room. After the firſt ſalutations were over, which were extremely cordial on both ſides, Miſs Simpſon ſaid, "Although you quitted the country without bidding me an adieu, yet I no ſooner diſcovered where you lived, than I haſtened to pay you a viſit."

Auguſta made her excuſes and acknowledgments to her friend, and then inquired by what means ſhe had learnt where to find her.

"By the mereſt accident on earth," replied ſhe, "I drove along Bond-ſtreet yeſterday, at the very time a carriage broke down; and as our progreſs was obſtructed, I had leiſure to look about me, and ſaw you at this window, anxiouſly intent to diſcover if the two ladies, whoſe cries were ſo loud, had received any material injury; and I marked the houſe ſo well, that I had no difficulty in finding it again."

Auguſta next inquired after the health of Mr. Simpſon and his ſon; and heard that the former was in town, and very much engaged by the buſineſs which brought him there; but that Mr. William Simpſon remained in the country, where he was no leſs taken up with the diverſion of hunting. Auguſta was much pleaſed to learn from Miſs Simpſon's converſation, that Lady Merton had aſcribed her haſty departure to a neceſſity which had compelled even her conſent: And ſhe could therefore with the more eaſe, liſten to the

information which Miſs Simpſon was diſpoſed to give her of that family.

"I do not think," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "that poor Lady Merton will ever ſee her family deſigns completed. My brother ſays that Miſs Merton is the greateſt jilt in nature; and it muſt be allowed he has juſt cauſe for thinking ſo. I dare ſay you well remember the flirtation which uſed to paſs between them, and the decided preference ſhe gave him before Lord Merton. Would you believe it? When Lord Merton was gone, ſhe behaved to him as haughty, and as inſolent, as ſhe at firſt uſed to do. I believe he had the courage to reproach her with her coquetry, which ſhe reſented as an unpardonable freedom, and would never ſpeak to him afterwards."

"I rather think," replied Auguſta, "that your brother preſumed too much upon her civility to him; for I believe her to be ſincerely attached to Lord Merton; and I am ſure that Lady Merton is now convinced of it."

"If you were not as humble as Miſs Merton is vain," cried Miſs Simpſon, "you would have perceived, as every body elſe did, who it was that poſſeſſed the largeſt portion of Lord Merton's affections. But to have done with them, and talk of ourſelves: I hope we ſhall be together very often, for the ſhort time I ſhall remain in London. I have ſo few acquaintances in town, that I am more alone here than in the country. My father has promiſed to take me to the play this evening. Pray come to me, and be of our party?"

Auguſta aſſented readily to this propoſal, and Miſs Simpſon, after having left her addreſs, took her leave.

The lodgings which Mr. Simpſon had taken for himſelf and his daughter, were at the houſe of

of a diſtant relation of his, a linen-draper, in Taviſtock-ſtreet: And thither Auguſta repaired early in the evening. She found the tea equipage already ſet out, and Mr. Simpſon waiting for her arrival moſt impatiently, with his watch in his hand. He told her, "That in order to enſure good places, it was neceſſary for them to be at the playhouſe ſoon after the doors were open; that then they ſhould have their choice."

He hurried her to a ſeat at the tea table without introducing her to ſeveral ſtrangers who were yet ſtanding: This omiſſion however was ſoon remedied by Miſs Simpſon, and the names of Mr. Mrs. and Miſs Wakeley were announced to Auguſta.

Mr. Wakeley was a very little man, of an accommodating aſpect; but not ſo his wife: Her ſtately air gave Auguſta an idea of her being a perſon of conſiderable importance; and indeed this ſuſpicion was confirmed by the appearance of the daughter, whoſe dreſs was moſt profuſely expenſive. A ſilence of ſome moments enſued, which was at length broke by Miſs Wakeley, who exclaimed, "La! mamma, if we can but get into a ſide box, how delightful it will be!"

"Do you ſuppoſe, my dear, that I will ſit any where elſe?" replied Mrs. Wakeley. "I rely upon Mr. Simpſon to ſee that we have proper places."

"I think, my love," cried Mr. Wakeley, "that we ſhould have ſent one of the ſhopmen to have beſpoke ſeats."

"When Betſy and I go by ourſelves," anſwered Hrs. Wakeley, "we are obliged to do ſo; but now we have my couſin with us, it is quite another thing."

"The beſpeaking of places, in my opinion, is quite *ſuperſtitious*," ſaid Mr. Simpſon. "Let us but be there in time, and we may have the ſeats we like beſt."

This little dialogue diſcovered to Auguſta who the perſons that had chiefly maintained it were; which had however no other effect than exciting her ſurpriſe at their being ſo ſolicitous where they ſat.

Tea having been hurried over, and a coach called to the door, the four ladies, and Mr. Simpſon took their ſeats in it: Mr. Wakeley having aſſured them, that he ſhould be at the play-houſe before they were.

According to Mr. Simpſon's wiſh, they arrived at Drury-Lane theatre, before the door which leads to the boxes was opened; he therefore ordered the box-keeper to ſhew them into a ſide box. There was no ſide box diſengaged.

Miſs Wakeley murmured; but followed her party into a front box. Mr. Simpſon in the mean time had made his way to the front ſeats, and was beginning to place the ladies, when a ragged fellow, who had kept his place very compoſedly, told him, that the two firſt rows were taken. They proceeded to the next boxes, which were all preciſely in the ſame predicament, and then, Mrs. Wakeley having proteſted that ſhe could not bear to ſit ſo far behind, it was propoſed that they ſhould try the ſecond range of boxes. Here however, no better luck awaited them, and they were obliged to return to the rejected benches in the front box. The movements of Miſs Simpſon and Auguſta had been regulated entirely by the others; for it was totally indifferent to them where they ſat, ſo that they could hear and ſee the performers. Miſs Wakeley was however extremely unhappy

happy, to have ſuch a dirty wretch, as ſhe termed the man who kept the ſeats, ſitting before them; and ſhe more than once expreſſed her horrour to Auguſta, leaſt he ſhould be ſucceeded by ſome vulgar people, for no others, ſhe ſaid, would employ ſuch a creature to keep places.

The performance commenced, but ſtill no company appeared to claim the front ſeats. At length the firſt act was concluded, and then a crowd of gentlemen from behind ruſhed forward, and the ragged keeper of ſeats withdrew.

"Heyday," cried Mr. Simpſon, "what can be the meaning of this. Pray, Sir, (addreſſing himſelf to the gentleman who had taken a ſeat before him) was that fellow employed to keep a ſeat for you?"

"No, Sir," replied the gentleman; "and I perceive, by the queſtion, that you are a ſtranger to this new ſort of impoſition, which has been only practiſed upon the public for ſome few years paſt. You muſt know then that thoſe men are employed by the box-keeper; who, not ſatisfied with the great preſents he receives from thoſe perſons of rank, who wiſh to take the ſide boxes for themſelves and their friends, is determined to extort from thoſe whoſe ſituation does not admit of their ſending footmen to keep places. If on your entrance you had given this fellow a ſhilling, he would have accommodated you with any ſeat you had choſen; ſo that to ſee a play to advantage, you muſt now pay this tax, in addition to the ſtated price of admiſſion. As the rules of the theatre do not allow of places being kept beyond the firſt act, you ſaw that we then ſeized upon the benches which had been kept empty."

"I wonder," ſaid Mr. Simpſon, "that the public ſubmit to ſuch an impoſition. I am ſure if I

had known it before, I would have taken up with any ſeats, rather than have given the fellow a farthing."

"The folly of imitating their ſuperiors," anſwered the gentleman, with a ſmile, "pervades almoſt every claſs of life. I am told it is uſual for people of rank to give ten guineas a ſeaſon to the box-keepers, beſides loading them with preſents of game. It would therefore be *mean* for thoſe who aim at any thing like gent lity, to refuſe doing what is practiſed by their betters. John Bull, (added he) is the only perſon likely to take up the cauſe; and I heartily wiſh the innovation may extend to the galleries, as we might then hope to ſee the whole redreſſed."

The gentleman then politely offered to exchange ſeats with Auguſta.

She expreſſed herſelf ſatisfied with her ſituation, but ſaid that Miſs Wakeley would be glad to get lower down.

The ſtranger then interceded with the gentleman who ſat on the front ſeat, and to her great ſatisfaction they made room for her. Here ſhe had an opportunity of diſplaying herſelf, without which her dreſs, which ſhe thought ſo pretty, would have been thrown away.

Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon, who were really attentive obſervers of the repreſentation, were greatly annoyed by the opening and ſhutting of the box doors; which every one ſeemed to cloſe after them with as much noiſe as they could: The former, however, had ſoon reaſon to rejoice in the obſcurity of her ſituation, for juſt before the play concluded, ſhe ſaw Lord Euſton enter one of the ſtage boxes. He did not ſtay long; and appeared merely to have come with a deſign of eſcorting ſome ladies home, who left the theatre before the entertainment

tertainment began. The diſtance would not admit of her ſeeing him very diſtinctly; tho' ſhe thought he ſeemed grave, and out of health. She was afflicted to obſerve this; and it added to her deſire of not being diſtinguiſhed by him.

The unexpected ſight of Lord Euſton had thrown her reflections into ſo different a train, that her mind was totally detached from every ſurrounding object; and very fortunately her companions were too much taken up with the humour of a new farce, to attend to the extraordinary revolutions her ſpirits had undergone. Mr. and Miſs Simpſon wiſhed her to ſup with them after the play; but ſhe declined their ſolicitations, and the ſame coach which ſet them down at their lodgings, conveyed her afterwards into Bond-ſtreet.

CHAP. XXXIII.

BESIDES the dread of reviving Lord Euſton's attachment for her, Auguſta had other motives, which induced her to wiſh that ſhe might remain concealed from him juſt at preſent. She could not with propriety receive any viſits from him; and ſhe knew that if he found her in ſuch ſociety, and ſo unprotected, his generous ſpirit would take the alarm, and that his ſolicitudes about her would be productive of much diſquietude to them both. She therefore reſolved to avoid going abroad with Miſs Simpſon as much as ſhe could, without ſub-

jecting herſelf to the imputation of caprice or unkindneſs; and ſhe flattered herſelf that the places they were likely to frequent, would not be viſited by Lord Euſton. She had ſcarcely ſettled the matter thus with herſelf, before ſhe ſaw Miſs Simpſon and Miſs Wakeley enter her apartment.

"Oh, my dear, dear Miſs Denbeigh," cried the latter, for Auguſta had entirely won her heart by giving her a front ſeat at the theatre, "Mamma has ſent me on purpoſe to aſk you to come to dinner. I dare ſay we ſhall go ſome where in the evening. I am dying to go to the opera, and if you and my couſin will but mention it, that will be the place."

"I am not well enough," replied Auguſta, ſtartled at the name of the opera houſe, "to go into public this evening; and as I ſhould probably be a check to the reſt of the party, I muſt be excuſed the acceptance of Mrs. Wakeley's invitation."

"Nay," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "do not refuſe us the pleaſure of your company to dinner. The party to the opera may take place another time. Indeed you muſt come to us to-day."

Miſs Simpſon was ſo well ſeconded by Miſs Wakeley, that Auguſta could not withſtand their entreaties; and therefore promiſed to be with them by four o'clock. To avoid the poſſibility of being alike compelled to go to the opera or elſewhere, ſhe however reſolved to go in an undreſs; and that this might not give offence to Mrs. Wakeley, ſhe determined to go on foot. Mrs. Davis was her attendant, and indeed her conductor; for ſhe knew not one ſtep of the way to Taviſtock-ſtreet, and durſt not have ventured thither alone.

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On her arrival ſhe was ſhewn into the ſame apartment which ſhe had ſeen the evening before; but to her ſurpriſe it was now crowded with company. They ſoon adjourned to dinner in another room, where a plentiful table awaited them, of which Mrs. Wakeley, who ſeemed highly gratified by this diſplay of opulence, did the honours.

The frequent hints of Miſs Wakeley, to form a party for the play, or Collins's bruſh, were at laſt attended to by the gentlemen; but as Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon poſitively refuſed to accompany them, the plan was at length dropped, and card tables were introduced. As Auguſta alſo declined partaking of this amuſement, one of the gentlemen, who was, as ſhe had been informed, captain of an Eaſt Indiaman, and Mr. Simpſon's very particular friend, ſeated himſelf beſide her, and began a converſation, which, as was natural on his part, turned to the various countries he had ſeen, and the immenſe oceans he had often traverſed.

Auguſta, to whom this ſort of character was entirely new, and whoſe taſte for knowledge inclined her to lend a willing ear to the communications of Captain Darnley, was highly pleaſed with his relations, and the avidity with which he anſwered her queſtions. She confeſſed to him that her ſurpriſe was unbounded, when ſhe reflected that the produce of the moſt diſtant parts of the globe were conveyed acroſs the tractleſs ocean in a wooden frame, made ſo manageable by the ingenuity of men, as to enſure a degree of ſafety, which baniſhed the apprehenſion of danger. "Certainly," added ſhe, "the navigation of the ſea is one of the moſt important diſcoveries that has ever

been made; and I ſhould ſuppoſe that a ſhip muſt be a glorious object."

"Is it poſſible, madam," cried Captain Darnley, "that you have never been on board a ſhip?"

"Indeed I know not how it would have been poſſible for me to have been in one," anſwered Auguſta, with a ſmile, "ſince I have never yet been upon the water even in a boat."

"Then," ſaid Captain Darnley, "I hope to have the honour of ſhewing you mine, which is at preſent on the Thames." And without waiting her reply, he gave a general invitation to the company, to dine with him on board the Ganges, the following day.

"Oh dear, exclaimed Miſs Wakeley, that "will be charming! And ſhan't we have a barge, "and go down the Thames?"

"If the day is very fine," ſaid Mrs. Wakeley, "I ſuppoſe we may go down the Thames, without appearing particular; but I fancy few people go on the water at this ſeaſon of the year."

"What ſignifies what other people do, if we have a mind to the thing," anſwered Mr. Simpſon. "I don't ſee why faſhions ſhould *precon-cert* us, when we are enough among ourſelves, to keep each other in countenance."

"Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Captain Darnley, "has never yet been upon the water, and therefore if the weather will admit of it, I think ſhe will be more highly gratified, if we go down the Thames."

"Indeed," replied Auguſta, "I cannot anſwer for myſelf, for I feel a ſort of dread of the water, which makes me apprehenſive that I ſhall prove a troubleſome companion in a boat."

"Oh,

"Oh, as for the matter of that," ſaid Miſs Wakeley, "you know one is always afraid on the water; but then there is no danger in the world."

"If Miſs Denbeigh ſuſpects herſelf of being a coward," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "let us go, as well as return, in carriages; for I am ſure where fear is, pleaſure muſt be baniſhed."

"I hope," replied Captain Darnley, "that Miſs Denbeigh will in this inſtance repoſe a confidence in me, and I will engage to ſecure her from any ſort of danger.

"To expreſs any apprehenſions of danger, in a voyage of a few miles, before you," ſaid Auguſta, with a ſmile, "muſt appear ridiculous and I am aſhamed of having given room for ſuch ſuſpicions. That mode of conveyance which is moſt agreeable to the party, will certainly prove ſo to me."

Captain Darnley then took upon himſelf to ſettle every thing, and the company gave themſelves up to the anticipation of the pleaſure which awaited them on the morrow. Miſs Wakeley was particularly enchanted with the idea of it; ſo much ſo indeed, that ſhe could not, as ſhe ſaid, pay any attention to her cards; and as the ſtake ſhe played was a high one, ſhe loſt no inconſiderable ſum. A very elegant ſupper was ſerved, to which they all ſat down; and as ſongs were propoſed afterwards, they did not ſeparate until a very late hour.

Such an entertainment, at ſuch a place, had greatly exceeded Auguſta's expectations, and ſhe condemned herſelf for having thought ſeverely of Mrs. Wakeley's pretenſions, ſince ſhe could afford to live in ſo ſuperior a ſtyle. Miſs Wakeley appeared to her a good humoured girl; and ſhe

pitied

pitied her for the affectation which deſtroyed the natural graces of her little perſon.

The morning was calm and cloudleſs, and the party were all aſſembled in Taviſtock ſtreet, by twelve o'clock: From whence they proceeded to the ſide of the Thames, and embarked in their pleaſure boat. The good ſpirits every body appeared to enjoy, kept up thoſe of Auguſta; who certainly did feel ſome alarm from the motion of the barge. Captain Darnley watched every turn of her countenance, and whenever he ſaw her look the leaſt apprehenſive, did not fail to remind her that they were in *deep water*, and therefore perfectly ſafe; which aſſurance however had a very different effect to what he intended. The buſy ſcene tranſacted on the Thames, together with the different views it afforded, were highly amuſing to her; and the various objects were all pointed out to her by Captain Darnley, as they rowed along. The beautiful domes of Greenwich hoſpital at length came in ſight; and as it was ſo early in the day, he propoſed that they ſhould leave the barge, and ſhew Auguſta the buildings. The nature of the foundation was explained to her, and ſhe beheld with infinite delight ſo grand a ſtructure, conſecrated to the noble purpoſe of affording an aſylum to thoſe brave fellows whoſe youthful ardour had rendered them the preſervers of Britain, and whoſe decrepid age now claimed the protection it found from a grateful nation.

As they were quitting the hoſpital, a coach drove to the door, from which three gentlemen alighted, who had much the appearance of being foreigners. They were followed by two others, and in one of the laſt Auguſta inſtantly recognized Lord Euſton. A retreat was impoſ-

ſible,

ſible, even if ſhe had been collected enough to have attempted it, for he alſo ſaw her, and loſt not a moment in approaching her. The evident joy, and intereſt he took in ſeeing her, were viſible to the whole company; and when, in addition to the many inquiries he had made after her health, he aſked her whither ſhe was going, Captain Darnley replied for her, and entreated him to join their party, if he was diſengaged. Forgetful of the friends he had attended, and indeed of every thing but the pleaſure of meeting Auguſta, he readily accepted the invitation, and in a few moments the boat put from the ſhore.

As Lord Euſton could not with propriety engroſs the whole of Auguſta's converſation, and he was beſides too well bred to neglect paying the moſt reſpectful attentions to the reſt of the party. Every one was charmed with ſuch an acquiſition as he promiſed to be. Miſs Wakeley ſtrove to attract his notice, and Mrs. Wakeley ſeemed to demand it by her air of pre-eminence: As yet however they were ſtrangers to his rank.

"Pray, Lord Euſton," ſaid Auguſta, during an interval in the converſation, "were not thoſe gentlemen foreigners who came with you to Greenwich?"

"They are Italians," replied he; "and now you remind me of them, I know not what they will think of me for having quitted them in ſo unceremonious a way. However, (continued he) Sir William Danby muſt take care of them; and when I relate my inducement, they will forgive my departure."

The title of Lord Euſton, which Auguſta had now firſt given him, made a wonderful alteration

tion in the countenances of moſt of the compa-ny, and ſuſpended for ſome time the mirth to which they had been diſpoſed. His high po-liſhed manners were, however, blended with ſo much complaiſant good humour, that each indi-vidual gradually felt themſelves reſtored to their eaſe, and now loaded him with ſuch an exube-rance of civilities as became exceſſively trouble-ſome: The more ſo, as they detached him wholly from Auguſta. She, in the mean time, reflected, with much concern, that in a place where ſhe had ſo little ſuſpected it, ſhe ſhould have encountered Lord Euſton. She had ob-ſerved that he viewed her companions with an eye of ſcrutiny, and plainly perceived that he waited impatiently for an opportunity of queſ-tioning her about her ſituation. To conceal it from him was totally impracticable; and all that ſhe could reſolve was, to prohibit his viſits, and to avoid the poſſibility of ſeeing him again. She was rouſed from this reverie by Captain Darnley, who pointed out to her the Ganges, Indiaman, which lay near Graveſend, and they were ſoon alongſide of her.

As the ſight of a ſhip was no new object to any one but Auguſta, they had little curioſity to go about it, and ſhe was therefore ſoon left, with Captain Darnley and Lord Euſton; the former of whom conducted her to each part, and ex-plained the different uſes of them.

She ſaw that Lord Euſton followed them with the hope of finding an interval to ſay ſomething to her; his deſigns were however ſoon defeated, for dinner was announced, and Captain Darnley led Auguſta into the cabin.

The entertainment was quite ſuperb; and the polite cheerfulneſs of the Captain ſoon inſpired his

his gueſts with an unuſual ſhare of hilarity. Miſs Wakeley proteſted ſhe was quite enchanted already with living on board a ſhip, and aſked him if he would take her to India: And Auguſta remarked, that when ſhe grew tired of the habitable world ſhe ſhould chuſe to adopt ſuch a partial ſecluſion from it as this.

The evening was uncommonly mild, and the pale beams of the moon trembled on the ſurface of the water. Their departure was ſpoken of with regret by every one; but carriages were waiting for them on the ſhore, and it was time to think of returning to London. Mrs. Wakeley however inſiſted that they ſhould not part when they arrived there, and invited the whole company to a ſupper at her houſe.

Lord Euſton was diſtinguiſhed by a moſt particular invitation, which he accepted, becauſe he could not deny himſelf the pleaſure of being near Auguſta, and becauſe it offered him the means of finding out where ſhe lived, whichh e had yet had no opportunity of inquiring.

They all aſcended the deck, in order to leave the ſhip, when a boat rowed along ſide of it, and a man demanded very impatiently whether Mr. Wakeley was ſtill abroad.

"Good God," exclaimed Mrs. Wakeley, "it is one of the ſhopmen! What can have happened?"

Mr. Wakeley ſtood pale and trembling with affright; Lord Euſton looked all amazement; and the reſt of the party betrayed an evident intereſt in the anticipated diſaſter.

The man ſoon reached the deck on which they ſtood, and without any preparation, told Mr. Wakeley that he had an execution in his houſe, and that the bailiffs were lying in wait for

for him. He added, that he had immediately taken a boat, to give him the information in time, to prevent his falling into their hands.

The conſternation that enſued is not to be deſcribed. Miſs Wakeley burſt into an agony of tears; Mrs. Wakeley reproached her huſband for having been the ruin of her fortune; and the poor man ſtood dumb with grief and ſhame, till rouſed by the violent and bitter invectives of his wife, he told her that her own pride, folly, and diſſipation had alone reduced them to this ſtate.

The altercation now kept up with equal warmth on both ſides, would probably have continued for ſome time, had not Auguſta, whoſe feeling boſom was deeply affected by this diſtreſſing ſcene, interrupted it, by aſking Mr. Simpſon, in the ſweet and ſoothing voice of pity, if nothing could be done to extricate Mr. Wakeley from his embarraſſments.

"I don't know whether there can or not," replied Mr. Simpſon, "till I hear what he owes. However I think he had beſt remain here, whilſt I go to town and inquire into the affair. If I can bring about his liberation I will."

"And what is to become of me and my poor girl?" cried Mrs. Wakeley, almoſt choaked by her tears. "We have now no houſe—no home—no ſhelter!"

"Pray, madam," ſaid Auguſta, "try to compoſe yourſelf. The friendſhip of Mr. Simpſon will, I dare ſay, ſoon reſtore you to your home; and for the preſent, I beg that you, Miſs Wakeley, and Miſs Simpſon, will go with me to Mrs. Mills's, where I know you can be accommodated comfortably."

The

The reſt of the company ſeemed now to have caught from Auguſta's generous exertions that ſort of compaſſion which leads to uſefulneſs; and they therefore ſet themſelves about thinking what could be done for this unhappy family.

It was at length decided that Mr. Wakeley ſhould remain concealed at Graveſend, and that Mrs. Wakeley, her daughter, and Mr. Simpſon, ſhould return to Taviſtock-ſtreet.

By this arrangement Miſs Simpſon only was to be Auguſta's gueſt; at which Miſs Wakeley murmured much, declaring ſhe could not bear to enter a houſe in which there were ſuch a ſet of Ruffians: But ſhe was ſilenced by her mother, who was determined not to go without her.

Auguſta, Miſs Simpſon, Lord Euſton, and Captain Darnley proceeded to London in one coach; Mrs. and Miſs Wakeley, Mr. Simpſon, and two more gentlemen in another.

It was ſo late an hour when they arrived in town, that Lord Euſton and Captain Darnley took their leaves of the ladies as ſoon as they had ſeen them ſafe into Bond-ſtreet: And thus the day, which had begun with ſuch flattering proſpects of pleaſure, eventually terminated in the bittereſt anguiſh to ſome of the party, and in diſappointment and chagrin to the others:—A ſad, but true epitome of the viciſſitudes of human life.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

EARLY the next morning Miſs Simpſon declared her intention of going to Taviſtock-ſtreet, both to inquire after Mrs. and Miſs Wakeley, and to make herſelf acquainted with the extent of their misfortune.

Auguſta thought herſelf too much of a ſtranger to obtrude upon them unſolicited, and therefore contented herſelf with ſending a meſſage which indicated her deſire to ſerve them, as well as her good wiſhes. She had not parted with her friends above an hour, before Lord Euſton ſent up his name, and was immediately admitted.

"It is given me at laſt," ſaid he, "to tell my dear Miſs Denbeigh how tranſcendently happy I was made yeſterday, by meeting with her ſo unexpectedly, after every inquiry I could make to diſcover where ſhe was had proved totally fruitleſs."

"You were very good," replied Auguſta, "to take ſo much trouble; and you have no doubt learnt, that Lady Merton is gone to Nice, to her ſon, who has been very ill."

"Yes," ſaid Lord Euſton, "that every one could tell me; but no body could inform me of what I was much more ſolicitous to hear."

The energy with which Lord Euſton ſpoke ſomewhat diſconcerted Auguſta, and ſhe remained ſilent: He therefore added, "I fear you are unwell. Your fatigue yeſterday, together with the agitation you ſuffered for the diſtreſs of your friends, was too much for your gentle ſpirits: But I have the pleaſure of telling you, that I have

I have ſeen them this morning, and that Mr. Wakeley's affairs are likely to be ſettled, and himſelf replaced in his buſineſs."

"I am ſincerely glad to hear it," anſwered Auguſta, "for though I know but little of them, it was impoſſible not to feel intereſted at the ſad reverſe of fortune with which they ſeemed threatened. I have been twice at their houſe with Miſs Simpſon, to whom they are related, and they ſeemed to abound with every elegance which affluence can boaſt."

"That," replied Lord Euſton, "I find from Mr. Simpſon, has been their bane; and he attributes their misfortune to the folly and extravagance of Mrs. Wakeley. But is it poſſible that you have no farther connexion with thoſe people? for I really imagined, from the authoritative tone and behaviour of Mrs. Wakeley, that ſhe was either a relation, or ſo intimate a friend, that you were in a great meaſure under her guidance."

"Your penetration has for once deceived you," anſwered Auguſta, with a ſmile: "but for Miſs Simpſon, I ſhould yet have been a ſtranger to Mrs. Wakeley; and it is probable my acquaintance with her would have continued no longer than whilſt ſhe remained a lodger in her houſe."

Lord Euſton appeared buried in thought for ſome moments, and then ſeemed ſtruggling for reſolution to ſpeak; at length he thus addreſſed her. "When laſt I parted from Miſs Denbeigh, I promiſed to baniſh myſelf from her preſence, until I could conquer that unhappy and unfortunate paſſion which was ſo diſpleaſing to her. I cannot ſay that thoſe ſentiments are entirely eradicated, for my eſteem and admiration of her

are

are interwoven with my exiſtence: But I return with a reſolution to offend no more, and with an affection ſo corrected as a friend and brother may profeſs. It is her friendſhip therefore that I now aſpire to: It is her acceptance of mine which I now alone preſume to ſolicit. If ſhe thinks me unworthy of this, there is but one more ſacrifice which I can make, and perpetual baniſhment ſhall be my lot."

Auguſta was much affected by the ſolemn manner in which Lord Euſton ſpoke.

"Oh!" cried ſhe, "can you doubt that I ſhall not value as I ought, ſuch a noble and diſintereſted friendſhip as you offer me? Yes, (extending her hand to him) you ſhall be the repreſentative of my firſt and moſt revered friend; who, if he can look down from that heaven which he inhabits, will glory in the virtue of his nephew, and rejoice that in his own family his poor Auguſta has found a ſincere adviſer."

"Well then," ſaid he, kiſſing her hand, and forcing himſelf to ſpeak gaily, "I will convince you how proud I am of my office, by the avidity with which I enter upon it; you muſt therefore allow me, as your adopted brother, to introduce you to my ſiſter, Lady Mortimer."

"It is an honour which would have gratified me highly," replied Auguſta, "whilſt I was with Lady Merton, and which I ſhall ſolicit you to confer upon me, when I am under her protection again; but in ſuch a retired plan of life, as I have laid down for myſelf, and in ſuch an obſcure ſituation, I cannot, with propriety, receive a viſit from Lady Mortimer."

"The reaſons you urge againſt it, are thoſe of all others," replied Lord Euſton, "which convince me of the neceſſity there is to give you ſuch

ſuch a friend as my ſiſter. The obſcurity of your ſituation, and your intercourſe with people ſo diſſimilar to yourſelf in taſte, manners, and education, is too painful to me to obſerve. The adopted daughter of Mr. Euſton has a claim upon his family, to reſtore her to that circle in which he has ſo eminently qualified her to ſhine."

"Alas!" anſwered Auguſta, "the fervour of your friendſhip miſleads your judgment. The bounty of Mr. Euſton affords no pretext for further claims upon his family: My brilliant proſpects faded when he fell, and my views now ſhould be moderated to the humble ſphere to which I am reduced."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Lord Euſton, "can I bear to hear this?" But ſuddenly recollecting himſelf, he added with a ſmile, "I had hoped that our newly cemented friendſhip would have given my opinion more weight with you; and although you may reproach me with tyrannizing over your inclinations, I ſhall ſtill have courage to perſevere where I know I am right."

"Unſkilled as I am in the world," replied Auguſta, "I diſtruſt the fallability of my own judgment: All that I can do is to act from feeling and principle, and I find that theſe are continually oppoſed by cuſtom. I will therefore no longer contend with you; and by giving up my own opinion, I ſhall ſurely convince you that I think more highly of yours."

Lord Euſton bowed. "Shall I then attend Lady Mortimer hither this evening?" aſked he.

"If you pleaſe," anſwered Auguſta.

He expreſſed himſelf much delighted with this compli-

compliance; and after ſome little time took his leave."

When Miſs Simpſon returned from Taviſtock ſtreet, ſhe ran up to Auguſta's apartment; who that ſhe might not appear inſenſible to the honour Lady Mortimer was to confer upon her, was dreſſing to receive her.

"O my dear Miſs Denbeigh," exclaimed ſhe, as ſhe entered her room, "what a noble creature is your friend, Lord Euſton. I do not wonder now that Lord Merton's partiality met with ſo little encouragement. It is evident that Lord Euſton is your admirer; and iti impoſſible for you to be inſenſible to ſuch exalted worth as his."

"Indeed," replied Auguſta, "your words are quite unintelligible to me. Lord Euſton and Lord Merton are both eſtimable young men; but I cannot conceive what the former can have done, to intitle him to ſuch encomiums from you, to whom, in fact, he is a ſtranger"

"I will briefly tell you," ſaid Miſs Simpſon. "He was with my father in Taviſtock-ſtreet this morning as early as ſeven o'clock. He ordered the ſervant to conduct him into his room, and having apologized for waking him, added that he came to make a tender of his ſervices to Mr. Wakeley. In ſhort he produced notes to the value of two thouſand pounds, which he ſaid he hoped would ſatisfy his creditors, and that he would wait the repayment until better fortune crowned his induſtry. My father, aſtoniſhed at ſuch an act of diſintereſted generoſity, attributes the whole of it to your influence, which is I think very natural.

"Amiable Lord Euſton!" cried Auguſta, "how much does this benevolence exalt you in my

my eyes! Ah, Miſs Simpſon! (continued ſhe) do not rob him of a particle of his merit, by attributing this bounty to any other cauſe than the goodneſs of his own heart. I neither knew of, or ſolicited it."

"I did not mean to infer either," replied Miſs Simpſon. "I only took it for granted that a ſuppoſed connexion between you and the Wakeleys, which aroſe, no doubt, from the compaſſionate ſhare you took in their diſtreſs, had procured them this moſt fortunate aſſiſtance from his lordſhip."

"I am glad to underſtand from your mode of expreſſion," ſaid Auguſta, "that his aſſiſtance is likely to produce the purpoſes for which it was alone intended. I therefore hope that every thing is ſettled, and that the affair is not got abroad to the detriment of Mr. Wakeley in his buſineſs."

"No," anſwered Miſs Simpſon, "he is now likely to do well again, if this mortification can, as I flatter myſelf it will, give a check to the extravagance of Mrs. Wakeley. I ſhall ſurpriſe you," continued ſhe, "by telling you that Miſs Wakeley is alſo diſpoſed of in an advantageous way."

"I am much pleaſed to hear it," ſaid Auguſta, "but pray tell me how."

"I believe," replied Miſs Simpſon, "that her mother's chief concern aroſe from the injury which ſhe conceived this would do to her eſtabliſhment; of which, from the education ſhe has given her, ſhe had formed very high expectations; and therefore availing herſelf of the general compaſſion which has been excited, ſhe has prevailed upon Captain Darnley to take her out with

with him to India, where ſhe makes ſure of her marrying ſome rich nabob."

"And is Miſs Wakeley willing to adopt ſuch a plan, for the advancement of her fortune? aſked Auguſta.

"Oh, yes," ſaid Miſs Simpſon, "ſhe is half wild at the deſign, and is already employed in preparing for her departure, which will take place in a few weeks. But, come, you are dreſſed, and my father is waiting for us in the dining room."

Mr. Simpſon was as profuſe in his commendations of Lord Euſton as his daughter had been.

"But for him," ſaid he, "I do not think I ſhould have been able to temporize with the creditors as I have done. Though I will own I thought his offers ſo extraordinary for a ſtranger, that I *deſiſted* to refuſe them for a long time. However, I hope my couſin will repay him as ſoon as he can. And now Mrs. Wakeley inſiſts upon my daughter's return to her houſe directly; for ſhe ſays our leaving them may create *premiſes*; and beſides ſhe wants her to aſſiſt in providing the finery for Betſy, who is going to India, to try to get a huſband."

When Auguſta found that Miſs Simpſon's return was a matter decided upon, ſhe could make no objections. They therefore departed, after having loaded her with acknowledgments for the kindneſſes ſhe had ſhewn them.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

AUGUSTA ſat waiting the arrival of Lady Mortimer, with trembling anxiety. Her emotion increaſed at the noiſe of each carriage which approached the houſe, and when at laſt ſhe heard one actually ſtop at the door, her agitation almoſt overcame her. Lord Euſton led in his ſiſter. "Here," cried he, "is the charming ward of our uncle."

Lady Mortimer threw her arms round Auguſta, and kiſſed her cheek with the cordiality of maternal affection. "She is juſt as you deſcribed," ſaid her Ladyſhip, turning to Lord Euſton, "and I already feel that I love her, as you wiſh me to do."

Encouraged by ſuch flattering ſentiments, Auguſta, as ſhe conducted Lady Mortimer to a ſeat, ſaid, in a ſweet but faltering voice, "How, madam, can I think of you as I ought for this condeſcenſion."

"Indeed, my dear Miſs Denbeigh," replied Lady Mortimer, "your thanks are reproaches to me. They place my omiſſions fully in view, and remind me of the happineſs I have loſt, in not claiming this pleaſure long ago.

"Indeed," cried Lord Euſton, gaily, "I am already jealous of your friendſhip; for in the mutual ſatisfaction you experience in knowing each other, you have conſigned me to abſolute oblivion."

"Oh, no," replied Auguſta, "that is impoſſible! The recollection of all your kindneſs, eſpecially this valuable proof of it, affects my

heart ſo deeply, that I find myſelf as poor in words as I am in every thing elſe."

"I am pained, Miſs Denbeigh," ſaid Lady Mortimer, "to obſerve the gratitude which thus oppreſſes your gentle ſpirit. I reverence the character of my uncle, although it was not permitted me to ſee him; and I ſhall be proud of ſhewing that attention to the object of his care, which the implacable reſentment of my father debarred me from paying to him. A failure in my duty to ſo near a relation, and eſtimable a man, though involuntary on my part, has embittered many of my moments of reflection. Do not therefore conſider the friendſhip I offer you as a favour impoſed on yourſelf, but be aſſured that you will oblige me by your acceptance of it, as it will afford me the means of making an expiation to him whoſe delight and darling you deſervedly were."

The tears which fell from Auguſta's eyes, for ſome moments impeded her utterance, at length ſhe ſaid, "This tribute to the memory of the beſt of men, is more ſoothing to my heart than even your Ladyſhip's kindneſs to myſelf. Alas! he deſerved from his own family, and from the whole world, all that reſpect which is due to exalted virtue: And although deeply injured by Lord Seaton, his own pure mind was free from the conſciouſneſs of offence to him. Lord Euſton has called me Mr. Euſton's ward, but I cannot ſuffer ſuch a miſtaken idea to remain in your mind. I had no affectionate friend to conſign me to his care. He reſcued me from poverty—he protected my helpleſs infancy—and he allowed the child of his bounty, to call him father! But never I am ſure, did he indulge himſelf with the hope, that his loſs would be ſucceeded by the protecting

protecting friendſhip of any part of his family; and his bleſſed ſhade would look down indignantly upon me, if I could be guilty of the preſumption of receiving it as my due."

Lady Mortimer was exceſſively moved. She called Auguſta ſweet and ingenuous girl, and again ſtrained her to her boſom.

"An uncommon ſentiment of affection," ſaid ſhe, "attaches me to you. It will be my pride as it is my ambition, to ſupply to you the dear friend and parent you loſt in Mr. Euſton. Do you think you can love me, as you did him; and will you prove it to me by coming to live with me?"

The ſurpriſe this unexpected propoſal gave to Auguſta was painted in her expreſſive countenance. However ſhe did not leave Lady Mortimer long in doubt of her acceptance of it, for, throwing herſelf on her knees before her, and looking with the moſt tender earneſtneſs in her face, ſhe cried, "Oh, madam, do I underſtand you right? Am I judged worthy the happineſs of being beloved by you? and ſhall I indeed be permitted to devote that life to you, which you once more render of value to me, by extending thus your generous protection?"

Lord Euſton had anticipated the efforts of Lady Mortimer, and re-ſeated Auguſta in her chair.

"This," ſaid he, "is the moſt delightful moment of my life, ſince it preſents to me the two deareſt objects I have on earth, thus forming a friendſhip which will be productive of the higheſt ſource of happineſs to each."

"To me," replied Lady Mortimer, "it holds out the flattering proſpect you prognoſticate. The mind and manners of Mrſs Denbeigh have an equal influence on my heart and underſtand-

ing; and I cannot tell you how much I feel myſelf obliged to you for having given me the pleaſure of knowing her."

Lord Euſton now aſked Auguſta if ſhe would not give them ſome tea; which ſhe immediately rung for: And a long converſation afterwards enſued, which ſerved to confirm the favourable impreſſion which the two ladies had received of each other.

Lady Mortimer and Lord Euſton departed at a late hour, and not before it had been ſettled that Auguſta ſhould remove into Portland-Place the next day but one.

If Lady Mortimer was charmed with Auguſta, ſhe was no leſs ſo with her Ladyſhip; who at the age of thirty-eight ſtill remained extremely beautiful: There was a ſoft melancholy in her countenance, which rendered it ſtill more intereſting; and the mild dignity of her manner, which was alike unmixed with either pride or affectation, bore a ſtrong reſemblance to that of Mr. Euſton. Auguſta almoſt ſuffered the temporary illuſion of believing that he really ſpoke to her, ſo much alike was the tone of their voices, and ſo ſimilar was the effect which her affectionate expreſſions had produced on her heart. She contemplated the happy proſpect which Lady Mortimer's friendſhip opened to her view: It was decorated with all the charms with which a brilliant and youthful fancy could embelliſh it. One object alone ſeemed to caſt a gloom over her vivid picture; and this was no other than Lord Seaton; but ſhe comforted herſelf with the hope that the indulgence of Lady Mortimer, would allow her to avoid his preſence, and amidſt theſe gay ideas of felicity conſigned herſelf to ſleep.

The

The morning was employed in writing to Lady Merton of her good fortune, and arranging every thing for her departure on the morrow, which the kind hearted Mrs. Mills heard of, with a mixture of pain and pleaſure; for ſhe could not but rejoice at the good fortune which awaited her friend, though ſhe bitterly felt the loſs ſhe was herſelf about to ſuſtain. In the evening Auguſta ordered a coach, and was conveyed to Taviſtock-ſtreet, for as ſhe had not ſeen Miſs Simpſon in the courſe of the day, ſhe was determined to appriſe her of the change of her reſidence. She found the family party aſſembled at tea. Mrs. Wakeley received her without any embaraſſment, or the leaſt change of behaviour; Mr. Wakeley was, however, in evident confuſion, and Miſs Wakeley, in a ſort of wild joy, ran towards her, and, throwing her arms round her neck, kiſſed her.

"This family, madam," ſaid Mr. Simpſon, "muſt regard you as their benefactreſs; ſince the *re-adjournment* of their affairs is certainly owing to you.

Mrs. Wakeley looked diſpleaſed at being reminded of her mortification; Mr. Wakeley bowed and was ſilent; but Miſs Wakeley exclaimed, "Oh yes! and I will be ſure to return the obligation when I go to India, for I will ſend Miſs Denbeigh one of the ſweeteſt gold muſlins that can be got."

Auguſta, willing to turn the converſation, which was as unpleaſant to herſelf as it appeared to be to others, aſked Miſs Wakeley how long it would be before ſhe left England.

"I hope," ſaid ſhe, "in three weeks; if I can have my cloaths made in that time I ſhall be the happieſt of human beings. Dear Miſs Den-

beigh don't you envy me? Surely India muſt be the moſt charming place in the world, becauſe you know gold, diamonds, and the moſt beautiful things are all ſo plentiful there."

"It is well," replied Mr. Simpſon, "if your good ſpirits do not *evacuate* before one half of the voyage is over."

"Indeed," anſwered ſhe, "you are miſtaken, Sir; I ſhall be ſure to bring my good ſpirits back again with me, becauſe I ſhall then poſſeſs the only thing which can give them, which are fine cloaths and a vaſt deal of money."

Auguſta and Miſs Simpſon ſmiled at her ſimplicity, and as ſoon as there was a ceſſation in the converſation, the former acquainted the latter that ſhe was going upon a viſit to Lady Mortimer, and ſhould not perhaps have it in her power to ſee her again for ſome days.

Miſs Simpſon ſaid ſhe ſhould have lamented this circumſtance, but that her father had juſt announced his intention of leaving town the next day but one.

They both expreſſed their mutual wiſhes that they might meet in the courſe of the ſummer, and with many expreſſions of kindneſs took leave of each other.

Mr. Simpſon gave Auguſta a very cordial invitation to his houſe; Mrs. Wakeley aſſured her ſhe ſhould be happy to ſee her at all times; and Miſs Wakeley repeated that ſhe ſhould not forget the gold muſlin.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

LADY MORTIMER's coach was at Mrs. Mills's door, the next morning about twelve o'clock, in which Auguſta was ſoon conveyed to Lord Mortimer's houſe in Portland-Place. Lady Mortimer's reception of her was flattering and kind to the greateſt degree. She begged of her to conſider herſelf entirely at home, and free from any of thoſe reſtraints upon her time, which would make it paſs unpleaſantly; and leading her to a moſt elegant dreſſing-room, added, that in that apartment ſhe would not be ſubjected to any interruptions, except when ſhe choſe to receive viſitors. The houſe was a moſt noble one, and furniſhed with all the magnificence which modern taſte could invent. Indeed there was ſuch an air of grandeur through the whole, that Auguſta, unaccuſtomed as ſhe was to ſo much ſplendour, would perhaps have felt it irkſome, had not the engaging and eaſy manners of Lady Mortimer, removed the ceremony, which every thing around her ſeemed to impoſe.

Lady Mortimer had ſoon a crowd of viſitors, to all of whom ſhe preſented Auguſta with the moſt diſtinguiſhing marks of reſpect.

Lord Mortimer returned home juſt before they were about to retire to dreſs. He viewed Auguſta with viſible pleaſure and ſurpriſe, and after the cuſtomary compliments were over, he ſaid with a ſmile, "Surely, my dear Lady Mortimer, this *muſt* be a relation. She is the exact

image of your former ſelf; and her manner reminds me equally of Lord Seaton."

There was ſomething in this ſpeech which made Auguſta bluſh exceſſively. Lady Mortimer perceived it, and gueſſing the cauſe, replied, "Indeed, my Lord, you compliment me too highly; I was never half ſo handſome; but I think your other compariſon more juſt; and it is natural that Miſs Denbeigh ſhould have caught the graceful manners of her guardian, who was always called an elegant man, and ſaid to reſemble my father.

"By the way," ſaid Lord Mortimer, Lord Seaton dines with us to-day."

"Does he?" cried Lady Mortimer. "Then my dear Miſs Denbeigh, you ſhall put on your beſt cap, for I am greatly anxious that your charms ſhould conquer all his prejudices. Come, let us dreſs directly."

The news of Lord Seaton's viſit was like a thunder ſtroke to Auguſta. To meet the man who had treated her benefactor with unmerited and unnatural cruelty, and whoſe injuſtice had compelled him to renounce the world, was to her the moſt dreadful circumſtance which could befall her, and gladly would ſhe at that moment have relinquiſhed the flattering proſpects which Lady Mortimer's friendſhip offered her, to avoid the ſight of a perſon whom ſhe always thought of with horror and diſguſt. Yet no alternative offered itſelf; for to object to aſſociate with the father of Lady Mortimer, and in her own houſe, where ſhe had juſt been received with ſo much kindneſs, was not to be thought of: She therefore prepared for the dinner party with a heavy heart, and without any of that ſolicitude for dreſs which Lady Mortimer had preſcribed; who

ſoon after tapped at her door, and they proceeded to the drawing-room together.

Reſentment was a paſſion Auguſta had never felt, except when ſhe thought of Lord Seaton. It ſerved only to animate her features, and give to her perſon that air of conſcious dignity which inſulted virtue often wears; ſo that when ſhe entered the room, ſhe was perhaps one of the moſt intereſting figures that ever was ſeen. Lady Mortimer led her towards Lord Seaton, who, haughty as he was, could not help doing homage to ſuch beauty: She next introduced her other gueſts, who were ſtrangers, and then gave her hand to Lord Euſton, who ſeated her in a chair next himſelf. The inquiries of Lord Euſton prevented Auguſta's obſerving the general attention ſhe had excited, or the ſilence which her entrance occaſioned. Lord Seaton was perhaps the perſon of all others in the party, whoſe curioſity was the greateſt to learn who Auguſta was; but the rigid obſervance of politeneſs, which he preſcribed to himſelf and others, would not permit him to inquire of Lady Mortimer, even in a whiſper.

At length dinner was announced. Lord Mortimer led Auguſta, and then Lord Seaton, detaining Lady Mortimer laſt, aſked her, Who that charming young lady was.

"A Miſs Denbeigh," replied Lady Mortimer, "and her beauty is her leaſt perfection."

"Denbeigh! Denbeigh!" repeated Lord Seaton, as they proceeded to the dining-parlour. "Pray of what family is ſhe?"

Here however they had reached the door, and her Ladyſhip had only time to ſay, "She is an orphan, and of a private family in Wales."

A vacant chair had been left next to Auguſta, which ſhe ſaw the Earl take poſſeſſion of with much chagrin. His civilities however for ſome time were not very perſecuting. In fact the words uttered by Lady Mortimer, *ſhe is an orphan of a private family*, had almoſt detached his thoughts from her: But as there is in real beauty a ſomething which forces itſelf on the heart, and commands where every thing elſe would fail, reſpect from the moſt haughty, ſo by degrees the noble peer again ſubmitted to its influence. Addreſſing himſelf to her, he ſaid, "Pray, madam, are you related to the Denbeighs of Beacon Caſtle?"

"No, Sir," replied ſhe.

"Nor to Lady Baſinſtroke, who was a Miſs Denbeigh?"

"I have not that honour, my Lord"

"I have ſomewhere elſe," reſumed he, "met with the name of Denbeigh, though I cannot juſt now recollect where: But indeed I have not been in Wales ſince I was a young man, and thoſe families which are not ennobled, ſoon eſcape ones remembrance. The romantic ſcenery of Wales is better imprinted on my memory, than the perſons' I met with there."

Auguſta was ſomewhat diſconcerted by his efforts to recall the name of Denbeigh, which ſhe too well remembered had met his eye, at the bottom of a letter, which ſhe herſelf had written.

Lord Euſton, who watched every turn of her expreſſive countenance with trembling ſolicitude, and ſuſpected her embarraſſment proceeded from Lord Seaton's ſcrupulous enquiries after her connexions, which he wiſhed to relieve her from, now ſaid, "If your Lordſhip is an admirer of ſuch

ſuch ſcenes, you will be charmed with the ſketches Miſs Denbeigh has made from them with her pencil."

"I ſhall think myſelf honoured, no doubt, by the ſight of them," replied Lord Seaton; "though after having viewed the ſublime and beautiful views with which Switzerland and Italy abound, I can ſcarcely think any which our own iſland produces will greatly charm me."

This ungracious ſpeech, which ſeemed calculated to repreſs the pleaſure which Lord Euſton had betrayed in ſpeaking of Auguſta's performance, hurt Lady Mortimer ſo much, that ſhe could not recover her ſpirits the whole time ſhe remained at table. As ſoon, therefore, as it could be done with propriety, ſhe and Auguſta quitted the room.

When they were alone, ſhe ſaid, "There is a ſubject on which I muſt, though it pains me, ſpeak to Miſs Denbeigh: But perhaps ſhe has heard of my father's peculiarities, and if ſo, all I have occaſion to ſay, is, that for my ſake I hope ſhe will overlook them."

"Your condeſcenſion and your goodneſs equally affect me, madam," replied Auguſta; "and if your diſcernment has diſcovered any diſlike in me to Lord Seaton, I hope you will place it to his behaviour to Mr. Euſton; and be aſſured, that as I am neither entitled to his civilities, or can indeed merit them, I ſhall not have the preſumption to flatter myſelf with the hope of receiving them."

"I entertain better expectations," replied Lady Mortimer. "By your means I hope to convince my father of the injuſtice he does my uncle's memory; and when once he becomes your admirer,

admirer, it follows of courſe that he will be your friend."

The gentlemen obeyed the ſummons to tea, and then ſeparated to attend their evening engagements. Lord Mortimer and Lord Euſton alone remained, to attend Lady Mortimer and Auguſta, to Lady Betty Caſtleton's ball, whither they repaired about twelve o'clock, after having devoted an hour to the ſweet powers of harmony. Lord Euſton was ſo importunate with Auguſta to dance, that ſhe was obliged to remind him of the impoſſibility there was of her having been able to attain that accompliſhment. When Lady Mortimer underſtood this, ſhe declined mixing with the dancers, and they ſauntered through the different rooms, and amuſed themſelves with obſerving the company. Having ſtopped in one of them, to partake of ſome ſideboard refreſhments, on turning round Auguſta perceived Miſs Felton ſtanding very near her. As the capricious behaviour of that young Lady had been forgotten, as ſoon as it had ceaſed to offend, ſhe approached her with an air of politeneſs and good humour, and paid her compliments. For ſome moments Miſs Felton appeared as if trying to recollect her; when ſuddenly, but coolly exclaiming, "Miſs Denbeigh, I think." She drew up her head, made her a low curtſey, and then turned to the gentleman with whom ſhe had been before converſing.

"My preſumption has been puniſhed," ſaid Auguſta, addreſſing herſelf to Lord Euſton; "for I have ventured to addreſs a fine Lady, who has totally forgot me in a few months."

"She is a compound of folly and affectation," replied he; "but I ſee ſhe is about puniſhing me worſe

worſe than ſhe has done you, by convincing me that ſhe remembers me. So pray let us try to avoid her."

They directly quitted the room, and ſoon after took their leaves of Lady Betty Caſtleton, and returned to Portland-Place.

CHAP. XXXVII.

SEVERAL days elapſed in a round of agreeable amuſements and domeſtic pleaſures; for Lord and Lady Mortimer were exceſſively attached to each other, and whilſt they partook of the pleaſures of high life, ſtill found their greateſt felicity at home.

Their only child, a ſon, about fifteen years of age, was at this time at Geneva with his tutor; for they had wiſely reſolved to remove him, at an early age, from thoſe ſcenes of folly and diſſipation which ſo frequently enervate the mind, and deſtroy the faireſt bloſſoms of youth.

The partiality they both entertained for Auguſta became every day more viſible; and ſhe now began to feel for them a conſiderable portion of that affectionate tenderneſs, which had lain dormant in her boſom ſince the death of Mr. Euſton.

Lady Mortimer frequently preferred her ſociety to the pleaſures which courted her abroad; and they often paſſed the whole morning together, in the calm and rational enjoyment of each other's converſation.

She

She was ſurpriſed at the great ſtore of knowledge ſhe found in her mind; at the ſtrength of her underſtanding, and the ſolidity of her judgment. Often, however, in the midſt of theſe converſations, a deep melancholy would ſeize her; and once the tears ſtreamed from her eyes. Auguſta ſtrove, by every delicate attention, to ſooth and reſtore her ſpirits; conceiving that ſuch agitation, without any apparent cauſe, muſt proceed from malady.

Lady Mortimer perceived her miſtake; and preſſing her hand between hers, ſhe ſaid, "Ah, my ſweet friend! I have a canker here, which robs me of my peace, and deſtroys my health; I will not long conceal my ſecret from you, ſince I hope to find relief from your gentle ſoothings; but at preſent I can ſay no more." And with this ſhe aroſe and left her.

Auguſta was greatly aſtoniſhed at what ſhe had heard. Lady Mortimer, who appeared bleſſed with every gift both of fortune and nature; who experienced the ſolaces of friendſhip, and the felicity of refined love;—how was it poſſible that ſhe could be unhappy? Surely it could not be her own diſtreſſes of which ſhe complained: Perhaps her benevolent boſom ſorrowed for the miſeries of another. This idea brought with it a ſuggeſtion that gave her real pain. Lord Euſton, thought ſhe, ſtill cheriſhes his former partiality, and has made his ſiſter the confidant of his paſſion. She doats upon him—ſhe will be his advocate—and I muſt either become the moſt ungrateful, or the moſt miſerable of wretches. Reflection however at length relieved her from theſe apprehenſions. The uniform propriety of Lord Euſton's behaviour, and the delicacy of his attentions, (ſo different from what they had formerly been)

been) led her to hope that theſe ſuſpicions were groundleſs. She next turned her thoughts to Lord Seaton: His inſupportable pride, his moroſeneſs, and the ſeverity of his manners to his children, had perhaps too deeply afflicted Lady Mortimer. This circumſtance was the only one ſhe could find, in the whole catalogue of human woes, likely to affect Lady Mortimer: and although it certainly did not tend to leſſen her diſlike of Lord Seaton, yet ſhe generouſly determined to adapt herſelf more to his humours, and ſtudy to pleaſe him; flattering herſelf that if ſhe did not ſucceed with his Lordſhip, it would at leaſt prove pleaſing to her friend. Juſt as ſhe had come to this reſolution, ſhe was told that the coach was in waiting, to convey her to Bond-ſtreet.

Lady Mortimer had kindly mentioned to her, that ſhe wiſhed her to have the attendance of a ſervant; and as her Ladyſhip had no one particularly in view, Auguſta deſcribed Mrs. Davies; and related as much of her hiſtory as ſhe could, without repeating the ſhare ſhe had in reſcuing her from want. Lady Mortimer thought her exactly the ſort of woman that would ſuit Auguſta; and it was in order to engage her, that Auguſta was now proceeding to Bond-ſtreet.

The good Mrs. Mills almoſt ſhed tears of joy at ſeeing Auguſta, and hearing ſhe was ſo happy; and Mrs. Davies, who was quickly ſummoned, ſhewed the greateſt ſatisfaction at the offers which were made her; and promiſed to enter upon her new office the following day.

This being ſettled, Auguſta haſtened back to Portland-Place, as they were engaged to dine with Lord Seaton; and ſhe wiſhed to diſplay, upon that

that occaſion, a moſt beautiful dreſs, with which Lady Mortimer had preſented her.

When they were ready, Lord Mortimer complimented her upon her appearance; and told her he believed ſhe had a deſign upon the Earl's heart. She ſmiled her reply, and they drove off.

On their arrival at his houſe, they proceeded acroſs a ſpacious hall, through a range of ſervants, in liveries richly laced, to the drawing-room, where Lord Seaton was waiting to receive them; which he did with as much ceremony, as if they had been the greateſt ſtrangers. He beckoned to Lady Mortimer to take a ſeat, the third from the top of the room; but Auguſta perceived he was at ſome difficulty in placing her; as there would have been great awkwardneſs, in leaving ſeveral vacant chairs between them and Lady Mortimer; which he yet ſeemed to wiſh to preſerve for ſome other gueſts: She therefore begged to be at a diſtance from the fire, and ſat down in a window near to the door. Lord Seaton was pleaſed to find that ſhe had made ſo proper a diſtinction for herſelf; and as he had ſtationed himſelf there, to be ready to receive his viſiters, ſhe engaged him at intervals in converſation.

All this parade ſeemed but the prelude to a gloomy viſit; and Auguſta heartily wiſhed it over.

The company conſiſted of the Prince and Princeſs of Caſſino, Lady Elizabeth Barton, Lord and Lady Marlborough and their two daughters, two Neapolitan Noblemen, and Lord Euſton.

Dinner was ſerved up in a moſt magnificent ſtyle; and Lord Seaton had placed his gueſts at table, with the ſame ſcrupulous exactneſs as he had

had before done in the drawing-room; of courſe Auguſta ſat at the bottom, and next to Lord Euſton; which was a happy circumſtance to her, as ſhe was totally unknown to moſt of the company, and equally over-looked by the Earl, amidſt the many right honourables, who engroſſed his attention.

After the cloth was removed, the converſation, in compliment to the ſtrangers, fell upon Italy. It was carried on chiefly in French; and at length turned on the beauty of the Italian ladies, which all the gentlemen, and eſpecially Lord Euſton, highly extolled.

The princeſs fixed her eyes upon him, and ſmiling, ſaid, in Italian, which ſhe knew few of the company underſtood perfectly; "Ah, my Lord, your politeneſs exceeds your ſincerity; for the fineſt women Italy can boaſt are abundantly excelled by your beautiful neighbour."

The cheeks of Auguſta were immediately ſuffuſed with the deepeſt ſcarlet; and the Princeſs perceiving that ſhe was underſtood, gave a moſt graceful turn to what ſhe had ſaid. She afterwards addreſſed herſelf frequently to her, as did the two Neapolitan Noblemen; and her anſwers ſoon convinced them, that ſhe was an entire miſtreſs of their language.

The Earl's attention ſeemed to be revived, by that which was ſhewn her by his gueſts; and from having been the moſt neglected perſon in the room, Auguſta, by this fortunate circumſtance, now appeared of ſome importance.

When the ladies retired, the Princeſs of Caſſino attached herſelf to Auguſta, and talked to her of their authors, their painters, and their muſicians, and was delighted, as well as ſurpriſed to find,

find, that ſhe was acquainted with the compoſitions of each.

Muſic was now propoſed; the gentlemen joined them; and the taſte of Auguſta excited the higheſt applauſe.

Lord Seaton now became one of her warmeſt admirers; reminded her that he was to ſee ſome of her drawings; and fixed the following morning to call upon her for that purpoſe.

The evening concluded as pleaſantly, as the former part of it had been unpromiſing to Auguſta; and what her own beauty and intrinſic worth could not procure for her, was thus accidentally accompliſhed, by the flattering marks of attention paid her by the Prince and Princeſs of Caſſino; who, though ſtrangers, from the ſuperiority of their rank, had been able to conquer the proud and prejudiced ſpirit of Lord Seaton.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

LORD and Lady Mortimer, whoſe fondneſs for Auguſta increaſed momentarily, obſerved the change of Lord Seaton's ſentiments with abundant pleaſure; and the ſatisfaction which ſhe ſaw it gave them, determined her to proceed in the plan ſhe had laid down.

The hour was now arrived, when ſhe expected to ſee him in Portland-Place; and Lord and Lady Mortimer were not leſs impatient than herſelf

He

He at laſt made his appearance; and having apologized to them, with much ceremony, for being later than his appointment, he ſat down to view the drawings. Their various beauties were criticiſed, with all the preciſion to be expected from a perſon who had paſſed the Alps.

Lady Mortimer obſerved, that there was a piece or two miſſing, which ſhe had particularly admired; Auguſta therefore went to fetch them from her dreſſing-room; and in her abſence Lord Seaton proteſted that he ſhould entreat the Princeſs of Caſſino to take a view of them, as they were the moſt perfect things of the kind he had ever ſeen. Amongſt the ſecond collection which Auguſta produced, there was a fine ſketch of the village where Mr. Euſton lived.

"This is a ſweet place," ſaid Lord Seaton. "Is it from nature or fancy?"

"Oh, from nature," replied Auguſta, forgetting herſelf in the retroſpection. "It is the ſpot, on which the happy days of my youth have been paſt. It is the ſeat of my adored and lamented Mr. Euſton."

"Of whom did you ſay, madam?" aſked Lord Seaton, with a countenance inflamed with ſurpriſe, and a voice raiſed by reſentment.

"Of Mr. Euſton," replied the terrified Auguſta; who too ſoon perceived the error ſhe had been guilty of.

"And who are you then?" demanded he, in an authoritative tone.

"She is," ſaid Lady Mortimer, "the adopted child of your brother."

"And have you," replied Lord Seaton, his eye darting fire, "have you dared to concur in the

the impoſition, which has been practiſed againſt me? Whether ſhe be the real, or adopted child of Mr. Euſton, ſhe is equally obnoxious to me; and I renounce you as my daughter, if you do not inſtantly withdraw your protection from her."

"The protection ſhe has found in my houſe," replied Lord Mortimer, "ſhe has highly merited; and I will not be dictated to, even by Lord Seaton, whom I ſhall receive there."

"Oh!" exclaimed Auguſta, with uplifted hands, "let me not be the cauſe of an unhappy quarrel between you. I will inſtantly go—indeed I will directly leave the houſe."

As ſhe ſpoke this, ſhe advanced towards the door; which was ſuddenly opened by Lord Euſton. Auguſta's laſt words, which he had heard, and the countenance of each of the party, immediately diſcovered to him the ſcene which had paſſed. He oppoſed her departure; and cried, in a voice of reproach, "Will Lady Mortimer conſent to this?"

"Oh, no," replied her Ladyſhip: "I cannot, I will not be parted from this dear girl. My father's prejudices I cannot imbibe: In every other reſpect he may command my obedience."

"And is it thus," replied Lord Seaton, "that my children conſpire againſt me? Was it not enough to make me degrade myſelf, and the rank I hold in the world, by receiving this obſcure character into my houſe, and introducing her to my friends? Will they alſo, in addition to this, ſtill countenance her, and openly rebel againſt me?"

"Call her not an obſcure character," cried Lord Euſton. "She would do honour to the

moſt

moſt exalted ſtation: And I myſelf have witneſſed how tenderly ſhe was educated by my uncle."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Lord Seaton, "to what wretchedneſs am I deſtined! Perhaps the next moment I may be doomed to hear, that an artful girl, brought up perhaps with that deſign alone, is to ſeduce my ſon, and ſhare in my family honours."

"I will own," replied Lord Euſton, with great calmneſs, "that I have adored Miſs Denbeigh, almoſt to diſtraction—that I have offered her my hand;—and that it would have been the glory of my life, to have contributed to the felicity of hers. Her mind however is too elevated, to be biaſſed by that ſort of honour, on which your Lordſhip alone lays a ſtreſs. She has rejected my addreſſes; and I have therefore reſolved, that the family honours, about which you are ſo ſolicitous, ſhall end in myſelf."

"This is inſupportable," cried Lord Seaton, almoſt choaked with rage; "but know, Sir, that, though you inherit my family honours, the wealth, which can alone ſupport them, is at my diſpoſal. And never ſhall it be divided with a wretch, who, ſome time ago, was a ſupplicant for my bounty."

"That, my lord," ſaid Auguſta, "is a reflection, and almoſt the only one, which I cannot ſuffer to paſs unanſwered from your lordſhip. In the letter which I wrote, to acquaint you of Mr. Euſton's death, I informed you, that his will had bequeathed every thing to me; and inſtead of ſoliciting your aſſiſtance, I offered to relinquiſh his little property, if you thought you had a prior right to it. Alas! his only worldly care was to

leave

leave me independent; and ſo benevolent were his heart and his precepts, that of his reſentment againſt your lordſhip, for which, doubtleſs, he had juſt cauſe, I never heard him ſpeak but once."

The mild, but dignified manner of Auguſta kept Lord Seaton ſilent for a moment; and Lord Mortimer, willing to avail himſelf of an interval, which he thought favourable, thus addreſſed him:

"The unhappy diſpute, which ſubſiſted between you whilſt living, does not, I hope, continue with the duſt of your departed brother. Miſs Denbeigh was dear to him; ſhe is ſo to us. Her innocence, her beauty, her unprotected ſtate, all entitle her to the aſylum ſhe has found here. Your lordſhip has mentioned your rank; is not mine equal? or am I leſs tenacious in the proper ſupport of it? How ridiculous would be our pretenſions to birth, if pride, arrogance, and caprice, were to annihilate the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of reaſon? Perhaps Miſs Denbeigh bears a relation to us; but whether ſhe does or not, ſhe is ennobled by her education, by her virtues, and by her accompliſhments: And I flatter myſelf that your lordſhip will be prevailed upon to ſacrifice an ill-placed prejudice, and to ſhare with Lady Mortimer and myſelf, in the pleaſure of beſtowing upon her thoſe marks of affection, which ſhe appears ſo well to deſerve."

"No, never," exclaimed Lord Seaton. "Nor will I ever again enter theſe doors, until I am aſſured that my daughter has given up a connexion ſo diſgraceful to her, as well as diſpleaſing to me."

"To give up our own opinions, and our own pleaſures, to a caprice altogether ſo unreaſonable, would

would be a folly," ſaid Lord Mortimer, "of which I cannot be guilty. We ſhall regret that we have not the honour of ſeeing your lordſhip here; but muſt conſole ourſelves with the reflection, that we have done nothing which ought to excite your diſpleaſure."

"This cool inſolence," cried Lord Seaton, ringing the bell furiouſly, "is intolerable." And then turning to Auguſta, and ſtamping violently with his foot, he ſaid, "How dareſt thou, reptile as thou art, ſtand thus ſerene amidſt the ſtorm thou haſt produced?"

"Oh, not ſerene;" replied Auguſta, the tears ſtreaming from her eyes; "my heart is torn with a thouſand agonizing ſenſations. Your lordſhip has awakened the keen remembrance of my former happineſs, and ſhewn me the bitter portion which now remains. Terrible as is the neceſſity of ſuch a reſolution, I declare to you it is my unalterable determination to leave this houſe to-night. I will ſpare the generous boſoms of Lord and Lady Mortimer; the conflict they ſuſtain between duty to you, and pity for the unoffending object of your hatred; and I will preſerve to your lordſhip the unalienated affection of your children, if my departure can do it."

"Can you be inſenſible, my father, to ſuch goodneſs as this?" aſked Lady Mortimer, whoſe tears fell almoſt as faſt as Auguſta's.

"If her artifices have impoſed upon you," replied he, "let her take care how ſhe trifles with my reſentment."

And having before ordered his carriage to the door, he abruptly left the room.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIX.

THE manner in which Auguſta had ſuſtained this ſcene, ſo extraordinary in itſelf, and ſo inſulting to her delicacy, had more deeply than ever intereſted her three friends in her favour. Lord Mortimer ſoothed her with the moſt affectionate expreſſions; and concluded by giving her an aſſurance, that he would conſider her in future as his child. Lady Mortimer confirmed theſe pleaſing promiſes; and Lord Euſton ſeemed already to have forgot his father's anger, in the ſatisfaction they afforded him.

Auguſta, having ſtruggled to compoſe her ſpirits ſufficiently, for the deſign ſhe had in view, at laſt ſaid, "Words almoſt fail me, when I would expreſs my gratitude for the exalted and affecting proofs of goodneſs with which I have been honoured by this family. Doomed as I am, to experience the tranſient view of happineſs, and then to be plunged into freſh diſappointments, the recollection of it will perhaps ſupport me in the ſevere trials which may yet await me. O Lady Mortimer! my kind,—my generous friend! how ſhall I bid you adieu? and yet it muſt be done!"

"Indeed, my ſweet Auguſta," cried ſhe, "it is decreed otherwiſe: We will not part."

"If I could be ſelfiſh enough to avail myſelf of theſe flattering ſentiments," replied Auguſta, "I am ſure I ſhould not long be able to preſerve your good opinion; ſince I ſhould then loſe that conſcious rectitude of principle, which canbeſt and alone intitle me to it. The enthuſiaſm of your benevolence conceals from you, at the

the preſent moment, a truth which will be heard: "That, in the practice of that virtue which you love, obedience to the will of a father is one of the higheſt duties it impoſes."

Lady Mortimer, Lord Euſton, and Lord Mortimer, looked at her with ſurpriſe and admiration; but did not attempt to interrupt her: She therefore proceeded.

"In thus exiling myſelf from you, my deareſt hope will be, that ſome fortunate coincidence of events may reſtore me to that protection which I relinquiſh; and that in the mean time I ſhall retain the undiminiſhed regard of my three noble friends."

"Your eloquence oppoſes its own ſucceſs," exclaimed Lord Mortimer; "for every word you utter opens a freſh ſource for our admiration, and binds us more cloſely to you."

"Ah! my Lord," ſaid ſhe, "the unfortunate have but one conſolation in adverſity, which is that of having acted rightly. I ſee, and feel my duty, in the preſent inſtance, and I will not depart from it. I have (continued ſhe, bluſhing from exceſs of agitation) one wiſh, which I hope may be granted. It is, that I may be permitted to leave the houſe, without taking a laſt farewell."

"Good God!" cried Lady Mortimer, "what inflexible integrity does this dear girl poſſeſs."

"I" replied Lord Euſton, in a melancholy voice, "know her reſolution too well to oppoſe it."

"Well," ſaid Lady Mortimer, "we will at leaſt wave all thoughts of parting for the preſent, and conſider———"

"Oh pardon me," cried Auguſta; "my word has been paſſed. Davis is, I ſuppoſe, by this time here. She will ſoon have packed up my

cloaths, and then——" She could not finiſh the ſentence.

"And what then are the deſigns of Miſs Denbeigh?" aſked Lord Mortimer with chagrin.

"To devote herſelf to retirement," replied ſhe; "and to be guided in her choice of it, by the advice of Lord and Lady Mortimer if they will condeſcend to beſtow it."

"You revive my almoſt broken heart by aſking it," ſaid Lady Mortimer. "The apartments in the lodge, at Denmore-park, ſhall be fitted up for you; and then we ſhall be within a ſhort walk of each other."

"Ah, madam," anſwered Auguſta, trying to ſmile through her tears, "Is it thus that you would cheat yourſelf? The plan on which I wiſh to conſult you, is my return to Mr. Euſton's villa. The preſent inhabitants are worthy people, and will, I am ſure, receive me. Alas! I left it, only becauſe I had not then the means of ſupport; but, ſince that time, the unexpected payment of Mr. Euſton's debts has made me ſo rich, that I can amply recompenſe them. Davis may go with me; and ſurely amidſt thoſe ſcenes which once conſtituted my felicity, I cannot be wholly unhappy."

"Ah, Miſs Denbeigh!" ſaid Lord Euſton, "I too plainly perceive the whole of your deſign, in fixing upon ſo remote a retreat. It is intended as an abſolute excluſion of us."

"And to what purpoſe would be my retreat," replied Auguſta, with a deep ſigh, "if that terrible, but neceſſary deſign was not to be accompliſhed. Lord Seaton might then with juſtice accuſe me of hypocriſy."

"This noble minded girl," ſaid Lord Mortimer, "is ſuperiour to us all; and her exalted ſentiments ſhall be no longer oppoſed. Go, my dear

dear Miſs Denbeigh, ſecure in the approbation of your own heart, and aſſured of the remembrance you have impreſſed on ours. Neither diſtance nor change of ſituation can produce an alteration in our ſentiments; and we ſhall unceaſingly endeavour to regain you, in a way that may be pleaſant to your own juſt and delicate feelings. In the mean time command me, in any way that may be uſeful to you; and if you would have me believe that you really entertain a regard for me and Lady Mortimer, do not object to our making you more independent, if we cannot make you more happy."

Auguſta's heart was too full, to make any reply. She waved her hand, in token of her acknowledgement; and, availing herſelf of the permiſſion granted to her, hurried out of the room. She reached her own apartment with difficulty; and, inſenſible to the preſence of Davis, threw herſelf on a ſofa, and gave way to the violence of her emotions.

The poor woman was too much ſurpriſed, to offer her aſſiſtance for ſome moments; however, ſhe at laſt entreated her to take a glaſs of water; which Auguſta drank, and ſoon became more compoſed. She then informed Davis, that there was a neceſſity for her immediate departure from Lord Mortimer's; and gave her directions to pack up her cloaths, and follow her in a coach with them to Mrs. Mills's. She ſaid ſhe ſhould herſelf go there in a chair; and ſent her to deſire a footman to call one directly.

If Mrs. Davis had poſſeſſed the talents of a modern Abigail, ſhe would have ſet her wits to work, to diſcover the cauſe of this ſudden

revolution; that ſhe might have conveyed the intelligence into the houſekeeper's room, and from thence through the whole family: That being the means, by which ſecrets of a family nature are generally propagated. She, however, received her directions with ſilent reſpect; and immediately ſet about the performance of them.

During her abſence, and whilſt Auguſta was putting on her hat and cloak, ſomebody tapped at her door. She opened it, and found it was Lady Mortimer.

"My Lord," ſaid ſhe, "has revived my ſpirits, by promiſing me, that our ſeparation ſhall be a very ſhort one. He has taken upon himſelf the arrangement of your journey; and our travelling chaiſe, attended by two ſervants, will be with you in Bond-ſtreet, at any hour you ſhall appoint, to-morrow morning; ſo that we ſhall be aſſured of your being properly protected on the road. And now my moſt dear friend, let me entreat, that you will accept of theſe two miniatures of Lord Mortimer and myſelf: and as often as you look at mine, aſſure yourſelf, that my thoughts are anxiouſly employed about you."

Auguſta preſſed the miniatures to her lips, and was beginning to expreſs her acknowledgements; when Davis opened the door, and told her the chair was in waiting. Lady Mortimer at the ſound of her voice turned round; and as ſoon as Davis had a full view of her face, ſhe gave a loud ſhriek, and fell ſenſeleſs on the floor.

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Lady Mortimer, "it is Baylis!"

A deadly paleneſs overſpread her countenance; and Auguſta had but juſt time to ſup-

por

port her to the ſofa before ſhe fainted. Diſtracted with terror, Auguſta rang her bell moſt vehemently; and, as no body came inſtantly to her aſſiſtance, (as indeed it was impoſſible they ſhould) ſhe darted along the gallery, and was proceeding down the ſtairs, with a ſwiftneſs that would have endangered her ſafety; when ſhe was met by Lord Mortimer, and Lord Euſton, who had been alarmed by ſuch an unuſual ringing of the bell. Lord Euſton caught her in his arms; but, by this time, ſhe could only articulate, "Lady Mortimer;" and point to the dreſſing-room. Lord Mortimer entered it firſt, and beheld the two lifeleſs objects. The ſervants, however, were now all in motion; and Auguſta, who had regained courage, by the ſight of aſſiſtance, now applied the remedies which were offered her. Lady Mortimer was the firſt that recovered. On opening her eyes, ſhe looked wildly about her, and ſaid, "Where, where is my child?"

Lord Mortimer, ſuppoſing ſhe meant Auguſta, anſwered, "She is here, my love."

"Oh, my Lord!" cried ſhe, "do you not recollect Baylis?"

"Baylis!" repeated Lord Mortimer, in a voice of aſtoniſhment; "can it be poſſible?"

"For God's ſake, what is the meaning of all this?" ſaid Lord Euſton to Auguſta.

"Indeed," replied ſhe, though ſcarce able to ſpeak, "I know not."

The ſurgeon, who had been ſent for by Lord Mortimer, on the firſt alarm, now arrived; and, as Mrs. Davis ſtill continued to ſhew no other ſigns of life, than a few convulſive ſtarts, Lady Mortimer inſiſted that his firſt cares ſhould be employed about her: He therefore inſtantly bled

her; and that operation recovered her ſo far that ſhe was able to ſwallow a cordial, which he had brought with him.

Lady Mortimer now rejected all the aſſiſtance which was propoſed to her; and declared, her recovery depended ſolely on the information ſhe received from Mrs. Davis.

"May we not queſtion her?" aſked Lord Mortimer; whoſe countenance now indicated the perturbation of his mind.

Certainly," replied the ſurgeon. "I apprehend no danger from that."

The ſervants were now diſmiſſed; and Lady Mortimer, turning her languid eyes upon Davis, ſaid, "Tell me if my child be yet alive?"

"Oh, madam," replied ſhe, "the puniſhment I have long deſerved, for my breach of confidence to you, is approaching faſt. I however, truſt, that the precious depoſit you left with me, is yet living, and———"

"Ah! ſay but that," cried Lady Mortimer, ſpringing with ecſtacy from the ſofa, "and I forgive the reſt."

"My life!" exclaimed Lord Mortimer, "theſe violent emotions are too much for you. Indeed they are. Let us convey you to your chamber; and I will collect from Baylis the information ſhe has to give."

"Oh! do not tear me, in my laſt moments, from my dear lady," cried Mrs. Davis. "Suffer me to avow my guilt to her, whoſe pardon can alone intitle me to mercy."

"I do pardon—I do forgive you," ſaid Lady Mortimer; "for, oh, you have told me that my child is yet living! ſay but where ſhe is, and I am happy."

"As

"As I believe, that I ſhall not long ſurvive," replied Mrs. Davis, "and the ſenſe of my guilt has long made me indifferent to life,——it is my wiſh, that my remaining moments may be devoted to a full confeſſion of my crimes. Alas! the puniſhment I deſerved, would long ſince have overwhelmed me, had not that angel in human ſhape (looking at Auguſta) been my preſerver. The confidence which your Ladyſhip repoſed to me (continued ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to Lady Mortimer) on your private marriage with Captain Ameſley, I never forfeited; and it was that, no doubt, which made you entruſt me with the care of the lovely infant, whoſe birth you were ſolicitous to keep a ſecret from Lord Seaton. I had remained concealed in Cheſter ſome months; and my little charge had daily improved in ſtrength and beauty, when I unfortunately became acquainted with Mr. Davis. As I paſſed for a widow, and, by the allowance of your Ladyſhip, was enabled to live handſomely, he ſoon made propoſals to me, which were at length accepted, and we were married. He had before this profeſſed himſelf an Iriſh merchant; but I too ſoon found, that he might more properly have been termed an Iriſh adventurer: However, as there had been ſome duplicity practiſed on my part, as well as his, I had no great right to anger. About this time, a handſome remittance arrived from your Ladyſhip; and it was then that I made a confeſſion of my real ſituation to my huſband. This ſum of money he thought would ſettle him advantageouſly in his own country; and, partly by threats, and partly by entreaties, he prevailed upon me to elope with him. The dear little babe, whom I loved as my own, I

would not be parted from; and we travelled acroſs the country, without any direction, that we might not be traced. The fatigue of travelling with ſuch a burthen, diſtreſſed me greatly; and it was then, that my huſband firſt propoſed to me to leave it behind. I was deaf to his advice, until chance directed us to a village, where, exhauſted with fatigue, we had ſtopped for refreſhment. I attended not much to the converſation of my huſband, who I found, was enquiring the character of the neighbouring gentry; but after we had quitted the village, he told me that he had learnt there was a moſt extraordinary man lived thereabouts, whoſe humanity and hoſpitality were ſo great, that he was ſure he would take care of the dear little infant, whom he had therefore determined to leave at his door. Intreaties and expoſtulations had no effect upon him more: And, in ſhort, my Lady, he made me take the few things we had with us, out of a ſmall deal box, which he had carried; and in this box the precious infant was left, at the door of the clergyman, at three o'clock one fine morning."

At this moment, Auguſta claſped her hands together in a wild agony, which interrupted the countenance of Davis's narrative; and fixing her eyes ſtedfaſtly upon her, ſhe cried, "Oh! ſay but that the name of this clergyman was Euſton! and this bleſſed moment——" She could utter no more, but threw herſelf at the feet of lord and lady Mortimer, exhauſted by the violence of her emotions.

"It is——it muſt be my child!" exclaimed Lady Mortimer; and ſhe ſunk down beſide her.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the ſcene which enſued. Lord Mortimer was himſelf almoſt reduced.

duced to the ſame ſtate as his wife and daughter. Lord Euſton ſhed tears of joy; and Mrs. Davis, revived by ſo happy a diſcovery, had fallen upon her knees, in gratitude to the Almighty. When ſpeech was at length reſtored to them, the interview was ſtill more affecting.

"Is it poſſible," cried Auguſta, "that heaven can mean tobleſs me thus?"

"Oh my daughter!' exclaimed Lord Mortimer, ſtraining her in his arms. "How proud I am to find *ſuch* a daughter."

"My heart ever owned her," ſaid Lady Mortimer.

"And mine too," added Lord Euſton; "and ſure I now may be beloved as an uncle"

"Davis," ſaid Lord Mortimer, "the injury you have formerly done us, is totally obliterated, by the happineſs of this moment: Retire, and take care of yourſelf."

"Oh," cried Auguſta, addreſſing herſelf to Lady Mortimer, "I conjure you, by the name of mother,—the firſt time the dear appellation has paſſed my lips,—to forgive the penitent, and reſtore her to your favour."

"Yes, my beloved child," replied her Ladyſhip, "I do forgive her; for I can refuſe you nothing; and I even bend in gratitude to the Almighty Diſpoſer of human events, that ſuch has hitherto been our lot: Since we find you now, all that the fondeſt parents could wiſh, in mind, manners, and underſtanding; which perhaps, had you been educated by us, might have been perverted, by the influence of a too diſſipated world. To your good, your great, your valuable preceptor, our hearts can never do ſufficient homage."

CHAP. XL.

LORD and Lady Mortimer now gave orders to be denied to all viſitors, for the remainder of the day. The tumult of their joy required retirement; and was too ſacred, to be prophaned by the eye of idle curioſity. As ſoon as they were ſufficiently compoſed, they begged their daughter, now Lady Auguſta Ameſley, to relate the incidents of her life; which ſhe did, by repeating to them the very affecting hiſtory which had been given her by Mr. Euſton, a few days before his death; as well as the manner of his death, and the diſtreſſes in which it had involved her. Her journey to London, and her firſt introduction to Lady Merton, were not omitted;—— and, leſt her quitting ſo amiable a protectreſs, might give riſe to any unfavourable ſuſpicions, ſhe now, for the firſt time, related the events, which had determined her to leave Merton Lodge. Lord and Lady Mortimer experienced a variety of emotions, during this little hiſtory. They ſhed tears over the misfortunes and death of Mr. Euſton; but theſe were effaced by the admiration which ſucceeded, at the magnanimity and diſcretion of their child. Although Lord Euſton was preſent, ſhe could not ſuppreſs her grateful acknowledgments for the many acts of friendſhip he had ſhewn her; and, without hinting at his partiality, painted in the moſt animated language his amiable ſolicitude to adviſe and ſerve her. The fond parents heard this, with inexpreſſible

preſſible delight; and loaded him with freſh marks of affection.

"And now," concluded Lady Auguſta, "I have to produce the garments, in which I was found. Mr. Euſton carefully preſerved them in a little cabinet, where they ſtill remain."

She immediately fetched them; and Lady Mortimer recogniſed the cap to have been the work of her own hands.

Lady Mortimer now briefly related to her daughter, that ſhe had been prevailed upon to marry Captain Ameſley, without the knowledge of Lord Seaton; as the only objection to his conſent, was, ſhe ſaid, the want of a title, which was not of the leaſt conſequence to her happineſs. The unexpected death of two of his couſins ſoon, however, put him in poſſeſſion of his family honours; upon which Lord Seaton renewed the treaty, and their having been before married, was carefully concealed from him. Davis's elopement with her infant had nearly (ſhe ſaid) broken her heart. She had an abſolute confidence in this woman, who had lived with her from her childhood: And that ſhe ſhould withdraw herſelf from the reward which her ſervices claimed, and ſecrete herſelf and the child, who muſt be a heavy expence, was ſo ſtrange and inexplicable a circumſtance that they could never account for it. Every poſſible ſearch had been made after them. Lord Mortimer himſelf had traverſed almoſt the whole of England; but never could gain a ſingle piece of intelligence, to guide him in his inquiries. This had imbittered all her other enjoyments, and thrown a gloom over her countenance. It was (ſhe ſaid) the very ſecret, ſhe was one day about to diſcloſe to her.—My mother

mother died (concluded Lady Mortimer) whilſt I was an infant; and, as I have always been told, of a broken heart. She ſacrificed her own choice to the ambition of her friends; which ſhe never afterwards forgave herſelf for."

Lady Auguſta availed herſelf of the firſt moment ſhe could, to viſit Davis. The poor wretch threw herſelf upon her knees, and ſupplicated her forgiveneſs.

"Indeed, indeed, my good Davis," ſaid ſhe, "I have nothing to forgive. What you did has eventually proved the greateſt bleſſing: But tell me, did you know that it was to one of my own family, that you conſigned me?"

"I did not," replied Mr. Davis; "for if I had, I think I ſhould have tried to cheat the vigilance of my huſband, and have concealed a written acknowledgment in the box."

Lady Auguſta lifted up her eyes to heaven, in gratitude to that good providence, which had thus brought about the diſcovery of a circumſtance, that was involved in ſo much myſtery.

"The remainder of your hiſtory," ſaid ſhe, "I am anxious to hear: What became of you afterwards?"

"A ſeries of diſtreſſes," replied Davis, "which it would pain your benevolent boſom to hear, attended us from that moment. Remorſe of conſcience left me no intervals of eaſe; and the buſineſs which my huſband began, with the money that was the price of my iniquity, never proſpered. Bankruptcy enſued; and, to eſcape the juſtice of his creditors, we flew from Ireland. Strangers as we were in London, hard labour was his only refuge. So ſcanty an allowance ſoon reduced us to all the horrours of want and miſery; but

but of that I need not ſpeak, ſince you, madam, were the adminiſtering angel, that relieved our wretchedneſs. Often have I been tempted to avow my guilt to you; but I withheld the confeſſion, until the means of reparation were within my power. Ever ſince you placed me in a ſituation, in which I could earn a comfortable livelihood, I have almoſt ſtarved myſelf, in order to lay up money to take a journey into Wales, to diſcover, if poſſible, what became of the ſweet little Matilda; for until I learnt that, I durſt not face my lady. Indeed I could never learn, whether ſhe was even living; as I knew nothing of Captain Ameſley's having a title; and was afraid of being too inquiſitive, leſt it ſhould create ſuſpicions."

"I have it much at heart," ſaid Lady Auguſta, "to ſend my kind friend, Mrs. Mills, an account of this diſcovery. You appear ſo well now, Davis, that, perhaps, it will do you no harm, to take a chair and go to her."

"Oh no, madam," replied Davis. "I aſſure you it will do me good to walk, and communicate the joyful tidings to her."

"I inſiſt upon it, that you do not walk," ſaid Auguſta. "I ſhall dreſs very little for dinner, as we ſee no company this evening; ſo that you may ſet out directly, and need not hurry yourſelf in your return. Give my love to the dear good woman, and tell her, my proſperity can never make me forget the friend, who ſo kindly ſoothed, and ſupported me in adverſity; and that I will call upon her, the firſt moment I have it in my power."

Davis flew to obey the commands of her Lady; who, after a trifling alteration in her dreſs, returned

turned to the drawing-room, and acquainted Lady Mortimer with what ſhe had done.

"I ſhall be moſt happy, my ſweet love," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "to evince my gratitude to all your friends. Lady Merton and Mrs. Mills have very high claims upon me. The former, for her diſcernment of your merit, when appearances were ſo greatly againſt you; the latter, for ſuch diſintereſted friendſhip, and goodneſs of heart, as is rarely to be found among perſons of her ſtation in life."

After dinner a conſultation was held, on the proper mode of acquainting Lord Seaton with this diſcovery. Lord Mortimer, with that true dignity of mind, which is equally diſtant from pride or arrogance, determined to ſee him that very evening; and to relate whatever had been concealed from him, as well as the tranſactions of the preſent day. Lord Euſton offered to accompany him; and, whilſt they proceeded on this errand, the two ladies paſſed an hour, in the ſweet and endearing exchange of reciprocal affection.

Lord Seaton was fortunately at home, and diſengaged; and when the names of Lord Mortimer and Lord Euſton were announced to him, he flattered himſelf they attended him, with a view to make conceſſions; and therefore he received them very graciouſly.

Lord Mortimer immediately entered upon the ſubject of his viſit: He firſt deprecated Lord Seaton's forgiveneſs for an action, which the ardency of his affection, and the impetuoſity of youth had plunged him into; and then acknowledged his private marriage. He next briefly related the loſs of their child, who had, in conſequence of their clandeſtine marriage, been ſecreted; and laſtly

laſtly declared, that they had that day diſcovered the daughter, for whom ſo many tears had been ſhed, and ſo much reſearch been made in vain.

Lord Seaton heard him with great ſurpriſe, mixed with his uſual degree of ſtatelineſs; and, when he had finiſhed, aſked, with coolneſs, where, and in what ſituation, he had found his daughter.

"I found her," replied Lord Mortimer, "in my own houſe, and in the perſon of the all accompliſhed, but rejected Auguſta Denbeigh."

"I cannot ſuppoſe," ſaid Lord Seaton, "that ſuch a ſtory as this can have been raiſed, for the purpoſe of reconciling me to her remaining in your family. Even my children could not, with impunity, practiſe ſuch an impoſition againſt me. I would therefore aſk you, my Lord, what reparation you can make to a young creature, for the deprivation of rank, which you have made her ſuffer, as well as for the obſcurity, to which you have condemned her? As for myſelf, I have little now to ſay againſt the indiſcretion of your private marriage; but for my grand-daughter, I feel greatly agitated, and indeed puzzled, how to bring about her introduction in the world."

"She is ſo charming," exclaimed Lord Euſton, "that there wanted but this one circumſtance of high birth, to make the whole world concur in their admiration of her."

Lord Seaton felt the poignancy of this remark. He did not however notice it; but, turning to Lord Mortimer, aſked where ſhe had acquired her poliſhed manners, and thoſe accompliſhments, in which ſhe ſo eminently excelled.

Lord

Lord Mortimer indulged his curioſity with the full recital of her hiſtory, connected as it was with that of his brother.

The philanthropy of Mr. Euſton—the picture of his retirement—his ſolicitude, and fondneſs for the object of his care—were all expatiated upon, with a degree of enthuſiaſm, that ſeemed to affect even the cold boſom of Lord Seaton; who, when it was finiſhed, remarked, that he was glad they were under no obligation to ſtrangers, or people of obſcure condition. His brother had many faults; but he would not deny him his virtues, upon this occaſion. However, the chief point now to be conſidered, was the dignity of the young lady; and he would heartily concur in the ſupport of that.

Lord Mortimer, finding his ſentiments ſo compliant and favourable, urged him to accompany them back to Portland Place; to which his lordſhip readily aſſented.

CHAP. XLI.

THE prejudices of Lord Seaton were thus conquered by his pride; and, when he arrived at Lord Mortimer's houſe, he not only embraced his grand-daughter with great affection; but ſtrove, by every expreſſion of kindneſs, to recompenſe her for the degradation, which he thought ſhe had undergone.

The evening was ſpent extremely pleaſantly, though not without ſome conceſſions to the vanity

of the Earl; who determined, that the entrance of Lady Auguſta, into what he termed the world, ſhould be as ſplendid as poſſible; and inſiſted upon her preſentation at court taking place, the following Saturday.

The various tranſactions of the day impreſſed the minds of all thoſe who were concerned in them, with the higheſt reverence and gratitude, for the goodneſs of Providence; and none more ſo than Lord Euſton; who, in Auguſta's ſteady refuſal of him, now found his greateſt happineſs; ſince their degree of conſanguinity muſt have rendered them miſerable in their union, if it had taken place.

Lady Auguſta, in addition to her other comforts, had the ſatisfaction of receiving a letter by Davis, from Lady Merton. It informed her of the marriage of Lord Merton with his couſin; and contained the moſt flattering expreſſions of kindneſs towards herſelf. In a very ſhort time, Lady Merton ſaid, ſhe hoped they ſhould all be in England; and then ſhe ſhould claim the happineſs of being favoured with the company of her beloved friend.

Such a combination of fortunate events concurred, to render her felicity compleat, that ſhe fain would have perſuaded herſelf it was ſo: But a ſigh, which eſcaped from her boſom, convinced her of the imperfection of human pleaſures. She had now ſuſtained the two greateſt trials of life; and, as ſhe had not ſhrunk under adverſity, neither was ſhe elated with proſperity.

As Lord Seaton had particularly inſiſted, that ſhe ſhould go no more into public, before her preſentation, Lady Auguſta remained quiet at home for ſome days.

The

The relations, and particular friends, of Lord and Lady Mortimer, who, by the care of Lord Seaton, were appriſed of their having recovered a long loſt daughter, indeed crowded to pay their compliments; and, amongſt the reſt, the Prince and Princeſs of Caſſino: whoſe notice had, perhaps, firſt procured her that of the Earl; and they were, therefore, not the leaſt welcome.

The name which ſhe was to aſſume, became next the object of Lord Seaton's ſolicitude. She had been called Matilda, by her parents; he therefore contended, that ſhe ſhould preſerve this name; they however yielded to her own wiſhes; and, out of gratitude to her beloved benefactor, ſhe choſe that of Auguſta. To pleaſe him, the names were united; and ſhe was preſented, as Lady Auguſta Matilda Ameſley.

The firſt time ſhe was permitted to go abroad, ſhe flew to the houſe of Mrs. Mills. The good woman hardly knew how to addreſs her, till ſhe convinced her, by her affectionate careſſes, that a change of fortune had produced no alteration in her manners.

"My mother," ſaid ſhe, "loves you, almoſt as much as I do. She will ſoon ſee you; and, if ſhe can, will repay the thouſand obligations I owe you."

Lord Mortimer's doors were now open for the reception of viſitors; and all the faſhionable world appeared to pay their compliments. The happy parents were delighted at the homage paid to their child; but ſhe herſelf had too recently experienced, how much of that admiration ſhe owed to circumſtances, to be either intoxicated by it, or ſet an additional value on herſelf.

Among

Among the viſitors, who came to pay their compliments of congratulation, to her infinite ſurpriſe, ſhe beheld Mrs. Sydenham and Miſs Felton. The former, indeed, had done nothing to offend her; but the ſhy behaviour of the latter, ſhe thought, would have exempted her from a viſit of ceremony like this. Unconſcious (at leaſt in appearance) of having committed any rudeneſs, Miſs Felton exclaimed, when ſhe approached her, "My dear creature, I am happy, to a degree, at your good fortune; for you have always been a great favourite of mine. Sir William will ſoon be here, to pay his reſpects to you; and I hope we ſhall be extremely intimate."

Lady Auguſta could not play the hypocrite ſo far, as to receive this addreſs, with the apparent ardour, with which it was delivered; and Miſs Felton, ſufficiently checked by the reſerve of her manners, ſoon departed.

Lord Euſton, who was an obſerver of this ſcene, ſoon after approached, and ſaid, "Your flippant acquaintance, my ſweet niece, has ſoon left you."

"Inſincerity like hers," replied Lady Auguſta, "ought at leaſt to be puniſhed, with the neglect I have ſhewn her. It is for ſuch friends as you (added ſhe, ſmiling) whoſe kind attentions purſued me, even in poverty, that I reſerve all my love."

"Ah," ſaid he, "I have long ſuſpected that there is indeed ſome favoured object, for whom that reſerve has been made."

"You gueſs right," anſwered ſhe, in the ſame lively ſtrain. "My heart muſt have been prediſpoſed in favour of another, when it refuſed to liſten to you."

"And

"And, am I not intitled to your confidence then?" replied Lord Euſton. "Oh my dear Lady Auguſta! a regard ſuch as I have felt for you, muſt be converted into the moſt perfect friendſhip; and, independent of the ties of blood which now unite us, there is not any thing which I would not do, to promote your happineſs."

"You have the beſt, and the moſt amiable heart in the world," anſwered ſhe; "but do you ſuppoſe, that, ſurrounded as I am with a thouſand felicities, of which I could have no expectation, I am not a happy creature?"

"The time has been," ſaid Lord Euſton, "when there was diſtraction in the thought. Now, however, though I am not leſs convinced, I am at leaſt more ready to promote your wiſhes. My fortune, my influence, and even my life are devoted to you, whenever you ſhall honour me ſo far, as to lay your commands upon my friendſhip."

"You are ſerious, my Lord," anſwered ſhe; "and the fervour, with which your offers are made, alarms me with the apprehenſion, that you really ſuſpect me of being attached to ſome unworthy object."

"Oh, far from it," ſaid Lord Euſton. "Whoever you diſtinguiſh muſt have merit; but if he ſhould have other wants, which I can ſupply, you will make me happy, by pointing out how I am to do it."

"My generous and exalted friend!" cried Auguſta, "every moment of my life convinces me more and more, of the goodneſs of your heart, and of the juſt claim you have upon the confidence of mine. You are not deceived; and I literally ſpoke truth, when I jeſtingly told you, that

that a predilection in favour of another had made me inſenſible to your merits. I have, however, no cauſe to bluſh for the object of it; neither can he be benefited by your noble intentions. Believe me, if there were any difficulties, within your power to remove, I would be more explicit; but, as matters are, your pity is all I could receive."

"I neither aſk, nor would hear more," replied Lord Euſton; "for I have no curioſity to be gratified, if I cannot be of ſervice to you. Promiſe me, if circumſtances ſhould ſo change, that I may ſtill be of uſe to you, that you will let me know it; and I will remain at preſent ſilent on the ſubject."

"I do promiſe you," cried ſhe, giving him her hand, in token of it; and, more company juſt then arriving, the converſation ended.

CHAP. XLII.

THE following morning, Lord Seaton ſent to aſk, when he might find Lord and Lady Mortimer at home, and alone. As the meſſage ſeemed to imply, that he had ſomething of conſequence to impart, an anſwer was returned, that they ſhould wait at home, the whole morning, in hopes of having the honour of ſeeing him. He arrived ſoon after; and, as Auguſta was in the room when he entered, ſhe aroſe with an intention to withdraw. He, however, prevented her,

her, by ſaying, he wiſhed her to be preſent at the conference.

"I wiſh," ſaid his Lordſhip, "to learn from you, Lady Auguſta, where, and in what manner, the remains of my brother are interred?"

The ſolemn manner, in which he had began to interrogate her, had agitated her ſo much, that ſhe did not readily reply; which Lord Seaton attributed to fear; and he therefore added, "Be not diſcompoſed, I mean yet to give him thoſe funeral honours, to which he is intitled."

"His dear remains," replied Lady Auguſta, "were depoſited, by his own direction, in the little church, of which he had been paſtor: And, although no eſcutcheon graced the proceſſion, a more noble and higher tribute awaited him, in the tears and bleſſings of all thoſe. to whom he had been friend, guide, and comforter. A plain marble ſlab, ſuited to the ſimplicity of his life, and which alone tells his name and family, points out the place where he is laid: His virtues will always be talked of, and ever kept in remembrance."

Lady Mortimer melted into tears, at the affectionate energy, with which Lady Auguſta had ſpoken: And Lord Seaton ſaid, though with ſome little heſitation, "In thus reſolving to remove the body of my brother to the family vault at Seaton Caſtle, I mean to pay reſpect to his memory, as well as to evince to the world, that I am ſorry for the diſagreement which happened between us. If, therefore, you think, that his reſentments againſt me were not ſo ſtrong—ſo very ſtrong—as to reject, whilſt living, any overtures of kindneſs to him; I will venture to pay

him

him the only atonement, which remains for me, now that he is dead."

"His whole life," replied Lady Auguſta, "was employed in the practice of the duties of Chriſtianity; and I am ſure, he would not have been wanting in one of its firſt precepts, the forgiveneſs of injuries, had it ever been ſolicited. As the removal of his remains, to the burying-place of his anceſtors, will certainly be a mark of diſtinguiſhing reſpect, I muſt own the contemplation of it affords me a melancholy pleaſure."

"It ſhall be done directly," ſaid Lord Seaton. "I will adviſe with people who underſtand theſe matters, that every thing may be conducted with the greateſt propriety: And I hope, Lord Mortimer, that you will attend me, and my ſon, to Seaton Caſtle; for I mean to be preſent upon the occaſion."

Lord Mortimer profeſſed his extreme readineſs to do ſo; and they then talked over the plan, which was to be purſued. After Lord Seaton's departure, Lady Mortimer ſpoke of her father's compunction of conſcience, with much ſatisfaction; and Lady Auguſta, whoſe thoughts were now turned upon her firſt friends, and former ſituation, took this opportunity of recommending David and Mary to her father, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Williams; to whoſe kindneſſes ſhe had been ſo much indebted. He commiſſioned her to offer one of his beſt farms in England to the former, if they ſhould wiſh to change their ſituation; and he empowered her to make an ample return to the latter, for the compaſſionate attention they had ſhewn her. He added, that Lord Seaton had intimated to him, that he meant to beſtow a donation, (which he ſuppoſed would be a liberal one,) among the pariſhioners; "And," ſaid

ſaid he, "I mean that my Auguſta ſhall contribute to the comforts of the friends of her infancy."

"Oh, my dear father," cried ſhe, "how conſiderate is your goodneſs! but I will own that I yet intend to treſpaſs farther upon your indulgence. I wiſh once more to viſit thoſe dear abodes of peace and cheerfulneſs; and to retrace them with my beloved parents."

"You have anticipated my deſign, my ſweet girl," replied Lady Mortimer: "I intend it ſhall be our firſt excurſion, next ſummer. But, in the mean time, there is another friend of yours within our reach, whom we will no longer neglect: The carriage is at the door; and we will drive to Bond-ſtreet immediately."

The rank of Lady Auguſta appeared a viſible reſtraint upon the behaviour of Mrs. Mills; and the acknowledgements of Lady Mortimer greatly diſtreſſed her. They both uſed every expreſſion of kindneſs to re-aſſure her.

"My daughter tells me," ſaid Lady Mortimer, "that you are about retiring from buſineſs, with a competency. If you have not yet fixed upon the place of your abode, let me entreat, that you will accept of one in my neighbourhood. It is a ſweet little ſpot, and juſt at the extremity of the ſhrubbery, at Denmore-Park, where we can ſee you every day; by which means I can alone diſcharge the obligations I owe you."

Auguſta added her ſolicitations; and Mrs. Mills, proud of this diſtinction, left every thing to the arrangement of Lady Mortimer, and promiſed to enter upon her new habitation, before the expiration of the ſummer.

The penitent Davis was next thought of by Lady Mortimer; and ſhe offered to her the choice of

of a penſion, ſufficient to enable her to live in comfort, or a continued attendance upon Lady Auguſta.

She joyfully preferred the latter; determined, as ſhe ſaid, by the fidelity of her future ſervices, to reſcue herſelf from the diſgrace, into which her former conduct had involved her.

CHAP. XLIII.

LORD SEATON, Lord Mortimer, and Lord Euſton, ſoon after left town, to be preſent at the re-interment of Mr. Euſton, in the chapel at Seaton Caſtle; and the ladies, upon ſo ſolemn an occaſion, reſolved to dedicate their time to ſtrict retirement. They alſo wore mourning for the week; and, during this interval, Lady Auguſta recounted to her fond mother a more particular hiſtory, than ſhe had yet given, of the tranſactions of her former life.

The return of the gentlemen plunged them again into ſcenes of faſhionable life; where the beauty and accompliſhments of Lady Auguſta rendered her the object of univerſal admiration.

One evening, Lady Mortimer and Lady Auguſta attended a grand rout, given by the Princeſs of Caſſino; and, as the former engaged at cards, the latter joined Lady Mellborough and her two daughters, who were indeed diſtant relations; and they amuſed themſelves in converſing with different parties of their acquaintance.

Late in the evening, Lady Auguſta ſaw Lord Euſton enter the room, accompanied by a gentleman in deep mourning.

"Do you know who the ſtranger is with Lord Euſton?" ſaid ſhe to Miſs Mellborough.

"It is Lord Sunderne," anſwered ſhe; "and I did not know that he was returned to England, until this moment."

"It is evident then," thought Lady Auguſta, "that the old Lord is dead;" and ſhe ſighed from the recollection of the ſolicitude, Mr. Devereux was uſed to expreſs at his illneſs.

The two gentlemen had, by this time, nearly approached them; and ſhe was aſtoniſhed at the great reſemblance, which Lord Sunderne bore to his brother; ſo great, that, but for his having a ſickly countenance, and being much thinner, ſhe would have thought it was Mr. Devereux himſelf. He ſtopped firſt, to ſpeak to Lady Meborough; who detained him ſome moments, by inquiries after his health: and then, turning to Lady Auguſta, bowed moſt reſpectfully, while Lord Euſton ſaid, Lord Sunderne. Her heart throbbed violently; and, conſcious of the confuſion ſhe was in, which ſhe wiſhed to conceal from her own party, ſhe turned haſtily to a Lady who was paſſing, and began a converſation with her. Lord Sunderne ſtill remained near her; but ſhe ſtudiouſly avoided looking at him again, fearing that her emotion had been obſerved. The Miſs Mellboroughs aſked him ſeveral queſtions; and ſhe obſerved, without appearing to attend, that his anſwers were chiefly made by monoſyllables; and that he was melancholy, and abſent. The Princeſs of Caſſino juſt then entering the room, good manners required, that he ſhould pay his compliments to her; and then Miſs Charlotte Mellborough

Mellborough ſaid, "What an elegant man Lord Sunderne is! it is a great pity he ſhould be ſo ſtupid."

Lady Auguſta, finding herſelf far from well, complained that the heat of the room overcame her; and Lord Euſton, fancying a greater change in her countenance, than there really was, conducted her into an outer room; and then went in ſearch of Lady Mortimer, whoſe party being broke up, their chairs were called, and they departed immediately.

Lady Auguſta took herſelf ſeverely to taſk, for the emotion ſhe had betrayed, at the ſight of Mr. Devereux's brother. "His ſolicitudes for me," ſaid ſhe, "have ceaſed to exiſt; and I ought to baniſh a perſon from my remembrance, to whom I am become ſo indifferent. He has long ſince been releaſed from his attendance upon his poor ſick father; and yet I, the pretended object of his warmeſt affection, have not once been thought of. Surely my diſintereſted conduct merited, at leaſt, the ſhew of reſpect: but I will puniſh his neglect—I will teach myſelf to think and ſpeak of him with indifference; and I will begin, by talking of him to his brother."

Theſe were the reſolutions ſhe formed; and it was not long before ſhe had an opportunity of putting them in practice. Lady Mellborough gave a ball the following evening: and thither ſhe was engaged to attend Lady Mortimer. She had heard Lord Sunderne promiſe to be of the party; and ſhe waited his entrance into the room, with ſome degree of anxiety. She ſaw him at length appear; and as he approached her, ſhe courteſied to him; but to her great ſurpriſe, although alone, he paſſed on. His melancholy appearance inte-

reſted her, and ſhe ſat down to obſerve him. Lord Euſton had taken his ſeat by her unperceived; until he at length ſaid, "Do you not think that Sunderne is amazingly altered?"

She ſtarted at his queſtion; but replied, "It is not poſſible that I can be a judge, as I have never ſeen him before laſt night."

"Is it poſſible then," cried Lord Euſton, "that you can have forgot Devereux?"

"Devereux," repeated Lady Auguſta, faintly: "How can Mr. Devereux and Lord Sunderne be the ſame?"

"By a combination of unfortunate or lucky events," replied he, "call them which you pleaſe. He loſt his father, ſome little time ago; and ſince then his elder brother has died of a fever."

The boaſted reſolutions of Lady Auguſta forſook her in a moment; and her embarraſſment became apparent to Lord Euſton.

"Good God!" ſaid he, "what can have occaſioned this agitation?"

"I am ſhocked," replied ſhe, trying to regain her compoſure, "at the reception I gave him laſt night. I really took him for the brother of Mr. Devereux: and treated him as a ſtranger."

"If that be all," ſaid Lord Euſton, "I will inſtantly reconcile my ſweet couſin to herſelf; for I will go and acquaint Lord Sunderne—"

"Oh, no, no!" cried Lady Auguſta, detaining him, "perhaps he would not like—perhaps he does not care—"

She left the ſentence unfiniſhed; and Lord Euſton viewed her with ſo much ſurpriſe, that ſhe ſhrunk abaſhed from his inquiring eye.

"I am

"I am convinced," he at laſt exclaimed; "Your ſecret, my lovely friend, is at length explained to me: I will fetch Sunderne hither; but let not your delicacy take the alarm; for that man alone ſhall receive ſuch a bleſſing, who knows how to value it as he ought."

He departed ſo ſuddenly, that Lady Auguſta had not time to prevent it. She redoubled her efforts to regain ſome degree of compoſure; which ſhe had but in part effected, when Lord Euſton returned with Lord Sunderne.

"Here," ſaid he, "I bring two maſqueraded friends together. In Lord Sunderne, madam, you behold Mr. Devereux; and in Lady Auguſta Ameſley, you, Sir, will recogniſe Miſs Denbeigh."

The countenance of Lord Sunderne was now animated with the moſt lively expreſſion of pleaſure.

"If," ſaid he, "Lady Auguſta will condeſcend to confirm to me this ſuppoſed miſtake, ſhe will relieve my mind from the moſt painful inquietude, it has ever yet endured."

"That I have been in an error reſpecting you, is moſt true," replied ſhe. "But are you more eaſily to be forgiven? or have I ſo many reſemblances, that you could not diſcover me?"

"I know but one image of you," anſwered Lord Sunderne, "and that is in my own memory."

Lord Euſton had by this time left them: Lord Sunderne therefore took his ſeat by Lady Auguſta; and after a pauſe, he added, "I had

had forgot there was another; but that I wear equally near my heart."

He then produced the miniature he had ſtolen from Auguſta's port folio; which was ſet in gold, and hung ſuſpended from his neck by a ribbon.

"If it be my own picture," cried Lady Auguſta, "I am totally at a loſs to gueſs, by what means you came by it. Pray tell me."

"I ſtole it," replied he, "from your port folio, in Lady Merton's houſe; and it has ever ſince been the companion of all my unhappy moments. Oh, Lady Auguſta! to what an extremity of wretchedneſs have you reduced me, by carefully ſecreting your reſidence, for the laſt two months! What had I done to forfeit your confidence?"

"Indeed," replied ſhe, "I never intended to ſecrete my retirement from you. Mrs. Brudenell knew full well, that I returned to Mrs. Mills's; and though my departure from her houſe, was ſudden, in conſequence of your kind intimations, I could not have been ſo ungrateful, as to ſuffer you to remain ignorant of my ſafety, if I had not known, that the information was within your own power, whenever you choſe to ſolicit it."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Sunderne, "what a victim I have been to an incenſed female. Mrs. Brudenell was deaf to all my entreaties; and my other inquiries were equally ineffectual."

"Well," ſaid Lady Auguſta, with a ſmile, "ſince we have been equally puniſhed, I believe we muſt mutually forgive her."

"You ſtill," anſwered Lord Sunderne, with a ſigh, "poſſeſs the ſame goodneſs, and captivating

tivating condeſcenſion. In allowing me to hope that you were ſurpriſed at a neglect ſo extraordinary, you afford me a ſolace for the miſery you inflicted upon me, by your cold recep ion of me laſt night."

"That," ſaid Lady Auguſta, "I hope has been explained to you by Lord Euſton. Totally occupied, as I have been, by a diſcovery of my own family, you will not wonder, that the two recent events in yours have eſcaped my knowledge. Your altered appearance confirmed my miſtake; and I received you as the brother of Mr. Devereux, to whom I was altogether a ſtranger. Do not believe, that the change in my ſituation has produced any alteration in my ſentiments. Ah! how unworthy I ſhould be of if I could forget the valuable proofs of friendſhip, which you ſhewed to the poor Auguſta Denbeigh."

"The ſolicitudes I have experienced, ſince I ſaw you, have been many and great," replied Lord Sunderne. "Domeſtic diſtreſſes have deeply affected my ſpirits; and the impenetrable myſtery thrown over your retreat, compleated my unhappineſs. The firſt evening of my arrival in London, I accidentally met Lord Euſton; and he acquainted me with your reunion with your own family. Shall I own to you, that this intelligence gave me the keeneſt regret? Deſerted, as I had been, by Miſs Denbeigh,—on whom my very exiſtence depended,—what could I expect from Lady Auguſta Ameſley? I however accompanied Lord Euſton to the Princeſs of Caſſino's; where I read in your embarraſſment and averted looks, a diſapprobation, that condemned me to perpetual wretchedneſs. I conjectured, you would be here this evening; and I came hither, to take a laſt

a laſt farewell of the object that my ſoul holds moſt dear."

At this moment, Lady Mortimer approached them; and they were immediately joined by Lord Euſton. They walked about the rooms, for ſome little time; during which Lord Sunderne loſt all his melancholy, and appeared the happieſt of human beings: And, when at length the two ladies withdrew, the gentlemen obtained permiſſion, to breakfaſt with them the next morning.

CHAP. XLIV.

LORD SUNDERNE retired from Lady Mellborough's, with emotions far different from what he had before experienced. Firmly perſuaded, that Miſs Denbeigh could feel no ſentiments of compaſſion for him, ſince ſhe had doomed him to a perpetual baniſhment; (for ſuch he termed her concealment of herſelf) he had given himſelf up to a melancholy dejection of ſpirits, which, by degrees, had conſiderably affected his health. Whilſt he believed her attached to another, he had reſolutely combated his paſſion; but after finding her diſengaged, to have his hopes again extinguiſhed, was a trial too hard to be borne. Indeed various circumſtances, and of a melancholy nature, had crowded upon him, juſt at that time; for he had ſcarcely cloſed the eyes of his father, before an expreſs arrived, to tell him, that his brother lay dangerouſly ill of a fever at Boulogne. Diſtracted by ſo many conflicts of mind,

mind, he hardly knew what ſtep to purſue: however piety prevailed. He ſaw the remains of his father conſigned to their kindred earth; and then flew, with the utmoſt expedition, to the brother whom he tenderly loved. Here, however, his attentions were unavailing: For a fortnight before his arrival, remorſeleſs death had ſeized upon his victim. He mourned, with fraternal affection, over his remains; and attended them to their laſt earthly manſion. Life ſeemed then to poſſeſs no longer any charms for him. The ties of domeſtic life were broken; and the hopes of a never to be exhauſted paſſion were extinguiſhed. The acceſſion of wealth—the enjoyment of titles,—occaſioned him only regrets; and his days paſſed on in gloomy deſpondency. Diſſatisfied with every place, becauſe he was ſo with himſelf, he directed his ſteps to the metropolis; and Lord Euſton, having received intelligence of his arrival from his valet, loſt no time in making him a viſit. He found him ſo much out of health and ſpirits, that his compaſſionate heart felt the livelieſt concern: and, ſuppoſing that this change proceeded from the melancholy ſcenes in which he had been lately involved, he judged, that the gaieties of the town offered the moſt powerful antidote to his dejected ſpirits; and, with this view, perſuaded him to accompany him to the Princeſs of Caſſino's rout. On their way thither, he acquainted him with the circumſtance of Auguſta's having been re-united to her family. The ſurpriſe and conſternation of Lord Sunderne was inconceivable. His emotion, however, could not be diſcerned by Lord Euſton; who alſo attributed his ſilence,—— which aroſe from exceſs of agitation,——to the abſorption of his own feelings, which took away from him the power of rejoicing at

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the felicity of others. He had ſaid, that he expected to find Lady Mortimer, and her daughter, at the Princeſs of Caſſino's. Divided between the pleaſure of ſeeing *her* he had ſo long loſt, and the apprehenſions he ſuffered, leſt *ſhe* ſhould view *him* with indifference; he entered the room, with ſuch a degree of perturbation, as almoſt overcame him, and added to the apparent want of health, under which he laboured. When he approached lady Auguſta, all his fears were confirmed. He obſerved, that ſhe ſcarcely looked at him; and that, as if to avoid any converſation with him, ſhe inſtantly turned from him, and addreſſed herſelf to a lady who was paſſing. In her endeavours to conceal the embarraſſment ſhe was under, he read cold reſerve, and confirmed diſlike.

It is not difficult to conceive the ſenſation, with which he quitted the room. Miſery appeared his only portion; for even hope, the wretch's laſt comfort, had forſaken him. He was not long in fixing upon his plan. England, the dear ſpot on which he had once fondly flattered himſelf, he ſhould enjoy uninterrupted felicity, was to be for ever abandoned; and one parting look, at the cauſe of his wretchedneſs, was all that he allowed himſelf. He had received from Lady Mellborough an invitation to be at her ball the following evening. There, as her relation, he ſhould certainly meet Lady Auguſta; and there he was determined to bid her adieu for ever.

This laſt, and ſo much dreaded interview, reſtored him, however, to all the delights of renewed hope, and anticipated happineſs; and the joyful tumults of his ſpirits kept him

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as much from reſt now, as grief had done heretofore. He roſe at an early hour, and waited the arrival of Lord Euſton; who was to call upon him, with the utmoſt impatience, though he knew it was yet too early to appear in Portland-Place. From the amazing change, Lord Euſton perceived in the countenance of his friend, his ſuſpicions were immediately confirmed; and after the firſt ſalutations were over, he ſaid, "Sunderne, you have been leſs candid with me than I deſerve: I made you the confidant of my infant paſſion——but you concealed yours from me?"

"And I ſhould for ever have concealed it," replied Lord Sunderne, "not only from you, but from all the world; if I had continued to believe, what I then thought, that you were the accepted admirer of the moſt adorable of her ſex. Oh Euſton! was it a time, when you diſcloſed to me your own pure and diſintereſted paſſion, to oppoſe mine to it, and torment your generous boſom with the pangs of jealouſy, or unavailing pity? I then doated upon your lovely niece, with a degree of diſtraction nothing ſhort of your own; but I reſolved to renounce her——to give her up to you, whoſe better expectations, and prior profeſſions, had the juſteſt claim to ſuch a prize;————and, in ſhort, to combat my paſſion, though it deprived me of my exiſtence."

"Good God!" exclaimed Lord Euſton, "how noble has been your conduct! Indeed, my dear friend, I fear I never could have emulated what I ſo much admire, had not the ties of conſanguinity effectually debarred me from

from a nearer union with the amiable object of our mutual admiration. But a rich reward (added he with a ſigh) will be the recompence of your virtue; and in the promotion of your happineſs, I can alone repay you, for the exalted proofs of friendſhip, which you have beſtowed upon me."

Lord Sunderne expreſſed his acknowledgements, in the warmeſt terms; and they then proceeded together to Lord Mortimer's.

The ſtrict intimacy, which had ſubſiſted between Lord Euſton and Lord Sunderne, from their early youth, had led Lady Mortimer to conſider him, almoſt in the light of a ſecond brother. His reception was, therefore, as cordial as poſſible.

Soon after breakfaſt was finiſhed, Lady Mortimer retired to write letters; and Lord Euſton, pretending buſineſs with Lord Mortimer, took him out of the room, and left Lord Sunderne alone with Lady Auguſta.

She firſt broke the ſilence, which enſued for a moment,—and ſaid, "I greatly fear, you have thought me guilty of much ingratitude; ſince I perceive, that Mrs. Brudenell, from motives which I cannot gueſs at, concealed from you, that I had returned to a ſafe aſylum. I ſhudder to think of the dangerous ſociety, your friendſhip reſcued me from; and, whenever ſhe has an opportunity, my mother will add her acknowledgements to mine."

"The miſery I have endured, in conſequence of my ignorance of your ſituation, has been unutterably great," replied Lord Sunderne. "The ſtory, which Mrs. Brudenell told me of your abrupt departure, I gave no credit to. Indeed I was bewildered with the many conjectures, which preſented

preſented themſelves to me; and when I had tried every method to diſcover your retreat, and found it impoſſible to do ſo, the ſuſpicions I had before entertained, that you had intentionally ſecreted yourſelf from me, were converted into a dreadful certainty.

Lady Auguſta was going to ſay ſomething in reply; but Lord Sunderne proceeded thus:

"In the laſt interview, I had the happineſs of enjoying with Miſs Denbeigh, her candour and condeſcenſion relieved me from an error, which had been fatal to my peace——and, in a moment, raiſed me, from the depth of human wretchedneſs, to the moſt exquiſite felicity. Preſuming on the unexpected diſcovery, that your heart was diſengaged, I ventured to diſcloſe to you the hiſtory of mine. You had the goodneſs then to pardon my temerity; but dare I now hope, that I ſhall not offend, by declaring, that not only my future happineſs, but my very exiſtence depends upon you?"

Agitated and abaſhed, Lady Auguſta tried to ſay ſomething; but her words died away upon her lips; ——and Lord Sunderne again pleaded his long and ardent paſſion, with all the energy, which unaffected admiration inſpires. Superior to the common artifices of her ſex, Lady Auguſta, in recovering from her embarraſſment, regained her uſual dignity of ſentiment and ingenuouſneſs; and Lord Sunderne was rewarded for all his paſt ſufferings, by hearing from her the ſweet confeſſion, that her own partiality had been of an equal date with his.

Lord Euſton, whoſe excellent heart now knew no pleaſure, but from the promotion of the happineſs of the two friends, whom he moſt dearly

dearly loved, acquainted Lord and Lady Mortimer with the long attachment which had ſubſiſted between them; and they were delighted to beſtow their daughter upon the man, whoſe diſtinguiſhing taſte had appreciated her merit ſo juſtly, at a time when poverty and diſtreſs had thrown a vail over its radiance.

Lord Seaton too, although he had raiſed his hopes to a Ducal Coronet, gave a willing aſſent to their nuptials.

Their union was productive of a degree of felicity, as refined as it is rare. The precepts of benevolence, of ſocial virtue, and of human kindneſs, which Mr. Euſton had practiſed, were remembered and emulated by them; and they were, therefore, a ſource of happineſs, to others as well as themſelves.

Among the many friends, whom their rank and affluence, as well as their virtues, created them, Lady Sunderne never failed to diſtinguiſh thoſe moſt, to whom ſhe had been indebted in the days of adverſity: Lady Merton, and the humble, though meritorious Mrs. Mills, were therefore her greateſt favourites.

Lord and Lady Mortimer, whilſt they witneſſed the felicity of their darling child, bowed with reverential gratitude to Providence, who had thus preſerved the innocent victim of their CLANDESTINE, becauſe INDISCREET marriage.

FINIS.